Halfway Humanitarianism:

The Gender Agenda's Potential and the Deficiencies of Policy and Practice

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Declaration

I declare that:

i. this thesis comprises my own original work and has not been carried out in collaboration with others

ii. this thesis is less than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of bibliography and footnotes.

Katherine Smith

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Abstract

The importance of considering gender in the effective delivery of international humanitarian assistance (IHA) is well appreciated by the international humanitarian community. Yet evidence suggests that the translation of this appreciation into effective policy and practice remains elusive. This thesis investigates the conceptualisation and implementation of gender policy across the international humanitarian system. It argues that global humanitarian responses continue to fail in consistently addressing gender-based issues and remain *ad hoc* despite a relatively constant global discourse on the issue.

The thesis pursues this argument in three parts. *Part One* reviews the theory, ethics and policy that drive IHA, including its gender work. It explores the theories of cosmopolitanism and communitarianism in international relations and the place of feminist theories within these. Drawing on this analysis, the thesis then moves on to discuss the history and contemporary expression of the international humanitarian system, considering its effects for gender work. *Part Two* examines humanitarian response in the field, exploring three case studies where humanitarian organisations responded to different types of emergencies in disparate parts of the globe. These case studies focus on responses to the ongoing displacement crises in South Sudan (2011 onwards), the cholera outbreak in Papua New Guinea (2009–2011) and the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami (2011). Through analysis of interviews and organisational documents, this section reveals that the implementation of gender policy is subject to the fulfilment of several conditions related to organisational mandate, emergency type, and pre-existing gender structures in the particular context. Together, these conditions suggest that the liberal feminist framework guiding gender work is inappropriate for, and ineffective in, the current international humanitarian system. Drawing together the arguments of *Parts One* and *Two*, *Part Three* elaborates that a deficit exists in the policy and practice of gender work in IHA as a result of its fundamental theoretical underpinning. To address this deficit, the thesis concludes by advocating for a change in prevailing approaches to gender in IHA. The thesis suggests that attention to a critical feminist ethics of care may be able to reform gender work to make it compatible with the various conditions of particular humanitarian contexts.

Contents

Abbreviations

AGDM	Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BCE	Before Common Era
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CFEC	Critical Feminist Ethics of Care
CFIR	Critical Feminist International Relations
DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
FIR	Feminist International Relations
GAD	Gender and Development
GEJET	Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IHA	International Humanitarian Assistance
IMHI	International Military Humanitarian Intervention
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IR	International Relations
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JRCS	Japanese Red Cross Society
MSF	*Médecins Sans Frontières*
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation

Oxfam	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
PNG	Papua New Guinea
RCRC	Red Cross Red Crescent
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees – UN Refugee Agency
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
US	United States (of America)
WAD	Women and Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization
WID	Women in Development

Introduction:
People and Their Stories – The Real Subjects of International Humanitarian Assistance

> ... during the night we got calls – a woman would call us late in the night, saying that she has been stalked by the higher-ups of the evacuation centre, or there has been clear violence and assaults happening ...
>
> The leaders at one evacuation centre had not even the basic knowledge of domestic violence and spousal abuse, so there was actually a very grave situation going on where the woman could have died and was very very serious but they didn't even recognise the signs or know how to deal with this. So, ideally, people who at least have knowledge of what domestic violence is and what it looks like would be chosen [to lead evacuation centres], but that doesn't usually happen.
>
> Young women who came in from other prefectures to volunteer, they have been victimised as well. We all know that this has happened on a larger scale.
>
> There had been cases where partitions were considered as hindrances to communication ... of course those evacuation centres are not going to adopt having partitions ... So, it really is telling in terms of what kinds of knowledge was lacking in those communities to begin with, prior to the disaster and that's a reflection of their lack of knowledge in terms of what happened at those centres.[1]

The above excerpts are drawn from an interview I conducted in April 2012 in a small *Starbucks* coffee shop in Sendai City, the capital of Miyagi prefecture, Japan. As we sipped our coffees, Naoko,[2] a middle-aged Japanese woman and long-time resident of Sendai, shared her experiences and thoughts on the gendered effects of the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami (GEJET) of 11 March 2011. In the warm, brightly lit café, complete with mellow jazz soundtrack, the harsh realities of the disaster which struck only a little over 12 months earlier seemed unreal and unbelievable, even in the midst of the affected region. The additional gendered consequences that Naoko spoke of – resulting not only from the disaster, but also from the relief effort itself – diverged from the stories of togetherness and community

[1] Local non-profit organisation (NPO) representative (Miyagi-Jonet), Interview with Author, Sendai City, 9 April 2012.
[2] All names have been changed to protect the identities of participants.

solidarity that had dominated western media following the tragedy.[3] Yet as we sat together and she showed me the work of her non-profit organisation (NPO), established after the disaster solely to cater for the women she was describing, the reality of her stories began to sink in. Her goal, she said, was simply to cater for some of those who had 'fallen through the cracks' of the international humanitarian system. In her view, women were especially vulnerable to this fate.

> There will always be people who fall through the cracks in terms of the more formal channels of relief aid and support and we would like for those people to receive care and services especially. The government or larger NGOs [non-governmental organisations] can always take care of people who don't fall through the cracks so our focus is on those who do, especially and including people who are considered disaster vulnerable populations.[4]

Distressing stories like the ones Naoko recounted are common in humanitarian crises. Humanitarian providers have repeatedly recognised that gender is an important variable in assessing the effects of, and determining an appropriate response to, a humanitarian disaster. In 2011, for example, a report funded by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) and CARE International on why 'sex and age matter' in humanitarian responses found unequivocally that '[s]ex/gender and age matter in terms of how people experience natural disasters and armed conflict.'[5] Disturbingly and despite this, the same report found that:

> ... almost no documented and published cases in which lead agencies within the five sectors under study collected SADD [sex and age-disaggregated data] properly, analyzed the data in context, used those findings to influence programming, and then carried out proper monitoring and evaluation to determine the effect on programming.[6]

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[3] See, for example: Justin McCurry, "Japan Tsunami Survivors: Defiance and Dignity Amid the Wreckage," *The Guardian*, 18 April 2011.
[4] Local non-profit organisation (NPO) representative (Miyagi-Jonet), "Interview with Author."
[5] Dyan Mazurana et al., *Sex & Age Matter. Improving Humanitarian Response in Emergencies* (Boston: Feinstein International Centre, 2011), 3.
[6] Ibid.

Naoko's stories confirm this, as do other stories like hers collected by researchers, aid workers and journalists who work in humanitarian spaces.[7] Anecdotally and empirically, research, testimony and experience have shown that gendered issues have not been addressed consistently in international humanitarian assistance (IHA). This is despite recognition by the international and humanitarian communities that gender should be a global policy priority and that attention to it is likely to increase the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance. With this in mind, this thesis examines the factors that influence the conceptualisation and implementation of gender in IHA. Specifically, it questions what prevents gender from being conceptualised and implemented in a way that will best address the needs of those affected by humanitarian crises.

Research Problem

Gender mainstreaming and/or sensitivity policies have been widely adopted by global humanitarian aid agencies. The international policy priority of 'gender' is demonstrated, for example, in the inclusion of gender as an important 'cross-cutting issue' in the Sphere Project's Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards on Humanitarian Response (Sphere Standards) – the *'de facto* standards in humanitarian response in the 21st century.'[8] There has been a strong push in the global humanitarian arena to ensure that gender is an established priority and that global frameworks for gender policy and its implementation in IHA are developed and adhered to. Research has demonstrated that attention to gender is likely to improve the effectiveness of IHA for recipient communities.[9] Yet the conceptualisation and implementation of gender policy and programming has been inconsistent throughout the international humanitarian system. The effectiveness and appropriateness of gender policy and programming has also been challenged by some recipient communities, humanitarian organisations and segments of the wider international community. At the same time, studies have demonstrated that the ways in which gender is conceptualised and implemented may not

[7] See, for example: UNOCHA, "OCHA Tool Kit: Tools to Support Implementation of OCHA's Policy on Gender Equality." (New York: United Nations, 2005), http://ochanet.unocha.org/p/Documents/OCHA_Gender_Equality_Toolkit.pdf; Annette Salkeld, "The Value of Gender Analyses in Humanitarian Livelihoods Programming: A Case Study from Nias Island, Indonesia," *Gender and Development* 16, no. 1 (2008).

be the most appropriate or effective for a given context.[10] Furthermore, despite discursive commitment to gender sensitivity in principle, it has not received the appropriate levels of attention in practice. In short, the conceptualisation and implementation of gender policy and practice has varied across settings, with erratic effects for recipient populations.

The purpose of this thesis is to answer two questions: what are the structural and contextual determinants of how gender policy is conceptualised and implemented in humanitarian responses and, leading on from this, what is the effect of this conceptualisation and implementation for humanitarian aid recipient populations? By seeking to explain the different approaches to, and understandings of, gender within the international humanitarian system, this thesis aims to influence discussions on the best way forward for addressing gender issues in IHA. The thesis will investigate these questions by looking for similarities and differences in gender policy and programming across three important and diverse case studies.

Literatures

This research situates itself between three major bodies of literature: feminist international relations (FIR), the emerging academic field of IHA, and policy literature on gender in development, humanitarian assistance and global governance. Discussions drawing heavily on each of these literatures will be provided in the first and second chapters of the thesis. The following provides only a very brief overview of the literature to help to position this research.

Feminist International Relations and International Humanitarian Assistance

The first major literature relevant to this research is that of FIR. Entering into the field of international relations (IR) in the early 1990s with works like Cynthia Enloe's *Bananas, Beaches*

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[8] The Sphere Project, *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response* (Rugby: Practical Action Publishing, 2011), iii.

[9] See, for example: Inter-Agency Standing Committee, "Women, Girls, Boys and Men: Different Needs – Equal Opportunities. Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action." (2006),

[10] Jennifer Hyndman, "Managing Difference: Gender and Culture in Humanitarian Emergencies," *Gender, Place & Culture* 5, no. 3 (1998).

and Bases,[11] FIR now includes a diverse range of methodologies, objectives and theoretical perspectives. As such, it maintains a high level of internal debate. Nonetheless, FIR can be broadly summarised as contributing to IR in three major ways: by exposing and challenging IR's gendered biases; by looking for and incorporating the voices of those excluded by mainstream approaches to IR; and by searching for ways to reconstruct both the theory and practice of IR to correct androcentric biases and allow space for hidden narratives and experiences. FIR theorists have engaged, for example, with issues of security, conflict, economics, governance and social justice. By adopting a gender perspective, this scholarship draws attention to the lived realities of both women and men in international politics. This, in turn, challenges the ways in which dominant IR theories, practices and institutions privilege masculine identities, roles and knowledge and devalue their feminine counterparts. In doing so, FIR theorists have employed what has come to be known as a 'gender lens' to analyse IR.

Of particular interest to this thesis are FIR analyses of natural disaster,[12] conflict,[13] security,[14] forced migration,[15] development,[16] human rights[17] and global ethics.[18] Each of these subfields offers an extensive literature on the particularities of women's specific needs in the given context and the ways in which the institutions and knowledge governing that context might be gendered. While these subfields provide an important basis for this research, it is important to note that on the whole, there has been little direct engagement from FIR scholars with IHA as a collective system. FIR writers have contributed in fragmented ways to the subfields noted

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[11] Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

[12] For example: Elaine Enarson and P. G. Dhar Chakrabarti, eds. *Women, Gender and Disaster: Global Issues and Initiatives* (New Delhi: SAGE, 2009).

[13] For example: Dyan Mazurana, Angela Raven-Roberts, and Jane Parpart, eds. *Gender, Conflict and Peacekeeping* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005).

[14] For example: Laura Sjoberg, ed. *Gender and International Security: Feminist Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2010).

[15] For example: Erin Baines, *Vulnerable Bodies: Gender, the UN and the Global Refugee Crisis* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

[16] For example: Janet Momsen, ed. *Gender and Development* (London: Routledge, 2008).

[17] For example: Anne Orford, *Reading Humanitarian Intervention. Human Rights and the Use of Force in International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[18] For example: Kimberley Hutchings, "Gendered Humanitarianism. Reconsidering the Ethics of War," in *Experiencing War*, ed. Christine Sylvester (New York: Routledge, 2011).

above but have tended to focus on conflict, peace and security issues.[19] Issues related to gender in non-military humanitarian assistance have tended to be case-study based and focused on one issue, context or agency within the international humanitarian system.[20] This thesis therefore situates itself amongst this work, but seeks to build upon it by linking FIR to humanitarian studies.

International Humanitarian Assistance

As a stand-alone academic subfield of IR, humanitarian studies has only developed over the last 10 to 20 years. In its short life, contributors have debated a plethora of important issues, all of which have relevance to the arguments of this thesis and the ways in which gender is conceptualised and implemented in IHA. Key theoretical debates have focused on issues related to humanitarian ethics and legitimacy, and problems related to the definition, intent, motivation and objectives of IHA within the international humanitarian system. Several authors have argued that IHA is suffering from an 'identity crisis' in the contemporary era, referencing its rapid expansion in actors, objectives and capacity.[21] At a more pragmatic level, questions of system coherence, resourcing, governance, coordination, accountability and modes of operation dominate the literature.[22] Each of these debates is gendered. However, the existing academic IR literature on IHA makes little mention of this and there has yet to be a sustained and comprehensive feminist or gender analysis of IHA as a practice or of the international humanitarian system. This thesis will play a part in rectifying this, by adding a feminist voice to the growing literature on IHA in IR, while considering itself part of this

[19] Including on conflict-induced forced migration, international military humanitarian intervention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

[20] Work focused on UNHCR has been particularly prolific. See, for example: Nikalaus Steiner, Mark Gibney, and Gil Loescher, eds. *Problems of Protection: The UNHCR, Refugees, and Human Rights* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

[21] See, for example: Michael Barnett, "Humanitarianism Transformed," *Perspectives on Politics* 3, no. 4 (2005)., Fiona Fox, "New Humanitarianism: Does It Provide a Moral Banner for the 21st Century?," *Disasters* 25, no. 4 (2001). Kurt Mills, "Neo-Humanitarianism: The Role of International Humanitarian Norms and Organizations in Contemporary Conflict," *Global Governance* 11, no. 2 (2005).

[22] John Borton, *Future of the Humanitarian System: Impacts of Internal Changes* (Berhamsted: Humanitarian Horizons, 2009).

nascent field and drawing upon the valuable and sympathetic work already being produced by key theorists such as Michael Barnett, Thomas Weiss and Fiona Terry.[23]

Gender Policy in International Aid (Development and Humanitarianism)

The final major body of work directly relevant to this thesis derives from the policy world of international aid. Although there is much overlap between practitioners and scholars writing on international aid (and indeed many writers play both roles), this literature has a much longer history and a pragmatic focus. It also indicates a strong commitment to gender justice in the aid arena and points to the progress made so far to this effect.

Gender considerations have been present in international policy debates around development studies from as early as the 1970s.[24] Yet only comparatively recently have such considerations been transferred to IHA, led by key humanitarian organisations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees – the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and Oxfam. Definitions of gender and approaches to incorporating a gender lens into humanitarian aid work vary, but attention to gender is nonetheless now found within the policies of the majority of humanitarian organisations.[25] As noted, this includes the Sphere Standards, along with several other global policy guidelines.[26] The evolutionary path of these policy debates and particularly their origin in the development arena are of great significance to this thesis and are discussed in *Chapter Two*. Similarly, pragmatic assessments of the effectiveness of such policies from aid

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[23] See, for example: Michael Barnett and Thomas Weiss, eds. *Humanitarianism in Question: Power, Politics, Ethics* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2008). Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2011). Fiona Terry, *Condemned to Repeat? The Paradox of Humanitarian Action* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2002).

[24] See: Eva Rathgeber, "WID, WAD, GAD: Trends in Research and Practice," *The Journal of Developing Areas* 24, no. 4 (1990).

[25] For example: Charlotte Lindsey-Curtet, Florence Tercier Holst-Roness, and Letitia Anderson, *Addressing the Needs of Women Affected by Armed Conflict. An ICRC Guidance Document* (Geneva: ICRC, 2004).
Frances Sheahan, "Save the Children's Policy on Gender Equality." (Stockholm: Save the Children Sweden, 2009), http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/Gender_Equality_Policy_Oct_09_1.pdf;
CARE International. "CARE International Gender Policy." http://gender.care2share.wikispaces.net/file/view/English%20CI%20Gender%20Policy%20and%20FAQ.pdf/206673128/English%20CI%20Gender%20Policy%20and%20FAQ.pdf, 12 March 2013.
UNOCHA. "Policy Instruction. Gender Equality: A People-Centred Approach." http://ochanet.unocha.org/p/Documents/PI%20-%20Gender%20Equality.pdf, 12 March 2013.

[26] For example: Inter-Agency Standing Committee, "Women, Girls, Boys and Men: Different Needs – Equal Opportunities. Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action."

organisations (development, humanitarian and multi-mandate organisations) inform the arguments and findings of this thesis. This research hopes to make a contribution to both academic and policy debates on IHA. As such, it also positions itself to draw from and input into this body of policy literature.

Argument

This thesis argues that global humanitarian responses fail to address gender-based issues effectively or consistently. In fact, despite a reasonably consistent global discourse around gender mainstreaming, the gender responsiveness of humanitarian actors remains *ad hoc.* Several factors contribute to this inconsistency. Most significantly, the theoretical approach that guides gender policy in IHA on a global level is inappropriate. Its embedded commitment to liberal feminist ideals (as will be discussed in depth throughout the thesis) is incompatible with the multiple forms of humanitarianism operating in the current international humanitarian system. This results in significant problems with the implementation of gender policies. These can be seen in three main areas. First, contemporary IHA is, on the whole, unable to understand or appreciate the importance of the local context (and its place in the wider international humanitarian system) for shaping gender policy and programming in individual responses. Second, the categorisation of particular emergency types as humanitarian, and therefore urgent, precludes meaningful attention to gender work as it is currently conceptualised – that is, as a long-term investment in social restructuring. Third, the varying organisational mandates and approaches of different humanitarian organisations often contradict the basic principles of a liberal feminist approach to gender work. This is particularly the case where humanitarian organisations take a traditional approach to IHA and seek to provide impartial, neutral and independent aid to relieve short-term suffering.

For these problems to be addressed, this thesis advocates for a change in the fundamental approaches to conceptualising and implementing gender policies. In particular, it promotes a critical feminist ethics of care (CFEC) which is subjectively designed to be relevant and adaptable to different contexts, emergency types and organisational approaches. A CFEC importantly advocates for a transformative approach to gender work. At the same time, it

pursues this transformation in such a way that allows it to operate in concert with politically neutral approaches to IHA, as well as those that have overt political agendas. An approach guided by a CFEC is capable of understanding the different types of humanitarianism and of adapting to these differences. As will be elucidated further, such an approach has two key areas of focus: relationships of care and relationships of power. Furthermore, it has two key guiding principles: the need to always recognise the subjectivity of experience and the importance of context. The thesis presents this argument through the investigation of three case studies and a broader examination of the theory and policy drivers of gender work in IHA.

Terminology

The thesis relies on several key terms that require consideration. As the thesis is primarily concerned with the policy and programming of humanitarian assistance, it is necessary to outline what will be included and not included in certain nomenclature, particularly as some of these terms are not used consistently by academics, practitioners and policymakers. The following definitions will be used for this thesis.

Gender

Gender is a key term for this thesis and is now a familiar concept in international policy discourse across different contexts. The definition given in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action (IASC Gender Guidelines) is largely representative of the many nuanced definitions that populate the specific arena of IHA:

> The term gender refers to the social differences between females and males throughout the life cycle that are learned, and though deeply rooted in every culture, are changeable over time and have wide variations both within and between cultures. "Gender" determines the roles, power and resources for females and males in any culture.[27]

These types of definitions are significant both in describing gender as socially constructed (as opposed to 'sex' which is often considered to be biologically determined) and because of their

[27] Ibid., 1.

prevalence in policy discourse. For the purposes of this thesis, the IASC's definition will be considered the base definition with several provisions. First, the assumption of gendered dualism, which is present in such definitions, will be rejected in favour of an understanding of gender as both multiple and fluid and comprising masculinities and femininities rather than simply social differences between men and women. Masculinities and femininities may be associated with either biological men or women, and may also pervade institutions, societies and global interactions, with ideal type forms dominating discourse and shaping power relations.[28]

In line with Kimberlé Crenshaw's thought, gender will also be understood at a personal level to be an intersectional identity marker, influenced by and influencing many other identity markers.[29] Finally, following Judith Butler's work, gender is understood as performative, and to be viewed as legitimate within a given cultural and social space must be performed within the existing 'matrix of intelligibility' of that space.[30] This becomes important when we consider that some performances of gender external to a community may not be considered legitimate when performed or demanded cross-culturally, as in the practice of international aid provision. Significantly, this dimension of gender is not always recognised in definitions, policies and practices of gender in IHA.

Gender is also used as an adjective to describe several ideas throughout the thesis, most notably – gender policy, gender programming and gender practice.[31] It is important here to distinguish between these three terms to avoid confusion. In short, these terms will be used as follows. Gender policy will designate an organisation's written commitment to consider gender in determining a course of action, and a commitment that this consideration will influence and determine decisions on programs. For the purposes of this thesis, gender policy may include

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[28] See: J. Ann Tickner and Laura Sjoberg, "Introduction: International Relations through Feminist Lenses," in *Feminism and International Relations*, eds. J. Ann Tickner and Laura Sjoberg (New York: Routledge, 2011).

[29] Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991).

[30] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York and London: Routledge, 1999), 24.

[31] Other concepts which are used throughout the thesis will be defined in the relevant chapters.

commitments on gender mainstreaming, gender analysis and sex-disaggregated data collection, gender sensitivity, gender equality and targeted policies related to gender, for example, on women's empowerment or sexual and gender-based violence. Gender programming refers to the act of designing aid interventions according to these policies, whereas a gender program will be considered to be the outcome of this design process. Gender practice concerns the implementation of gender policies and programs on the ground.

Critical Feminist Ethics of Care

In its use of the term 'critical feminist ethics of care' (CFEC), this thesis will follow the scholarship of Fiona Robinson and her pioneering work on bringing a feminist ethics of care to IR.[32] Where the thesis refers to a feminist ethic throughout its argument, it specifically speaks of the feminist ethic associated with a CFEC, rather than that of a broader feminist approach. Importantly, it is also distinct from broader iterations of care ethics, as it understands that relations of care, whether they exist globally or locally, are neither inherently good nor evil, but are constructed based on various contextual conditions.[33] In her work, Robinson suggests that global attention needs to refocus on care relations to achieve human security. She argues that for human security to be achieved, first, humans need to be understood, not as autonomous, but as 'beings-in relation'; second, relations and care responsibilities must be understood as integral to everyday experiences of security; and third, that assumptions about dependency and vulnerability in global and local interactions must be challenged.[34] I use her framework as a key tool to examine the programming intended to meet (gendered) needs and increase (gendered) wellbeing and security in humanitarian response. In *Chapter Six* and the *Conclusion*, it assists in formulating my suggestions for reframing current approaches to gender work.

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[32] See, for example: Fiona Robinson, *The Ethics of Care: A Feminist Approach to Human Security* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011). ———, *Globalizing Care: Ethics, Feminist Theory, and International Relations* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999). Note that although this thesis draws from Robinson's particular approach, care ethics has a long and broader tradition, beginning with the work of Carol Gilligan and Nel Noddings. See: Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982). Nel Noddings, *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

[33] Robinson, *The Ethics of Care: A Feminist Approach to Human Security*, 5.

[34] Ibid., 10.

The particular and potential value of a CFEC for the humanitarian space is considered in detail in the case studies and particularly in *Chapter Six*. However, it is useful to outline it here briefly. A CFEC pays particular attention to relationships. It is interested in how relationships of power form around identities, actors and practices. It argues that once we can reveal the biases in these relationships, we can begin to challenge them. This creates transformative political possibilities for change in exploitative power relations.

For IHA, this means that aid recipients and providers must be understood as relational beings, not autonomous agents. An effective humanitarian response must understand that an individual's experience of security and wellbeing is inherently tied to their relationships of care and responsibilities to others.[35] Notably, this includes unequal relationships where certain roles may be feminised or considered of lesser importance. Context and relationships are all important. This includes not only local relationships, but also those existing on a global scale, between donor and recipient states, between aid workers and beneficiaries, and within seemingly coherent social groups (for example, the recipient community, the donor community, the aid community). As an ethical framework, a CFEC challenges existing assumptions about autonomy, dependence, power, benevolence, responsibility, vulnerability and strength in global and local politics. Considering relationships of care contextually as an everyday part of life, a CFEC argues that they may either contribute to or jeopardise an individual's perception of security. At the same time, a CFEC is committed to the transformation of unequal and exploitative relationships uncovered by this investigation, according to what is context appropriate. The transformative potential and intent of a CFEC is a central theme for this thesis and will be revisited as discussion continues.

Although this thesis focuses on a CFEC, it is important to note that there is no simple or singular broad definition of feminism. It is an internally contested theory, covering a plethora of approaches, loosely linked together by an interest in addressing gender-based oppression.[36] In IR, the areas of inquiry of feminist academics range from how best to achieve women's

[35] This is additional to attending to sex-specific (biological) needs.
[36] A commitment to 'emancipation' is rejected by some post-positivist theorists. Tickner and Sjoberg, "Introduction: International Relations through Feminist Lenses," 5.

equality with men on the formal global stage to how ideas about gender shape and are shaped by global politics, and what the effects of this are on lived experiences. Some FIR scholars also question the naturalness of the concepts of 'women' and 'gender' and what a deconstruction of such terms and their binaries might mean for global politics. FIR scholars are both positivist and post-positivist and use both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. In short, the field is rich and diverse and, like the discipline of IR more broadly, often internally incongruous. The thesis takes an inclusive understanding of what feminism means in IR and acknowledges the value and shortcomings of each feminist contribution. While doing this, however, it is important to note that particular feminist approaches (most notably liberal feminism) have dominated public sphere debate on feminism and are likely to be associated most easily with the term feminism by non-specialist audiences, including many humanitarian policymakers and practitioners. In addition, this research is framed by a broad critical feminism, and driven specifically by a commitment to a CFEC as outlined above. The particular commitments of this broader theoretical framework are outlined in the discussion under the heading 'Analytical Framework/Approach' below.

International Humanitarian Assistance

The boundaries of IHA as a stand-alone practice are difficult to define. Most humanitarian providers also operate as development assistance organisations or advocacy agencies, or a combination of the three. As such, attempting to characterise IHA requires looking at the circumstances, methods and impetus for its provision rather than those who provide it.[37] The definition of IHA used in this thesis recognises the ambiguity of the practice, its inherent tensions and the uncertainty of the cut-off point on the spectrum from IHA to, for example, development, peacebuilding, international military humanitarian intervention (IMHI), or democracy promotion. For this reason, and noting likely exceptions, IHA has historically been typified as:

- international (helping distant others) rather than national (helping our own)
- short term rather than long term

[37] As Borton argues, this would require drawing lines through agencies. Borton, *Future of the Humanitarian System: Impacts of Internal Changes*, 6.

- focused on restoration of pre-disaster society rather than deep transformation of society
- responding to an urgent (or perceived as urgent) rather than non-urgent crisis
- presented as adhering to the seven fundamental principles of humanitarian action[38] rather than other frameworks
- presented as needs-based rather than rights-based
- voluntary rather than obligatory
- motivated by the humanitarian imperative[39] rather than other motives.

In addition to these subjective requisites, IHA is provided in accordance with the Sphere Project's Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (discussed above).

International Humanitarian System.

The term 'international humanitarian system' is used throughout the thesis. A continuing debate in the literature on IHA revolves around what should and should not be included in this nomenclature. Walker and Maxwell suggest that '[t]he international humanitarian system is a system that allows those caught up in a crisis to articulate what they need to alleviate their suffering while allowing others in the human family, who are better off, to provide the resources to meet those needs.'[40] They outline four categories of actors comprising the system:

- subsets of individual countries' aid structures
- multilateral organisations
- the Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) Movement
- structured groups of private citizens: community-based organisations (CBOs), which tend to arise from within communities in crisis, or non-governmental organisations

[38] Humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality. See: ICRC. "The Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent." http://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/icrc_002_0513.pdf, 11 September 2013.

[39] '... that action should be taken to prevent or alleviate human suffering arising out of disaster or conflict, and that nothing should override this principle.' The Sphere Project, *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response*, 20.

(NGOs), which are often external to, but wanting to assist, the crisis-affected population.[41]

For the purposes of this thesis, these four types of organisations will be considered to comprise the international humanitarian system, noting that the preface 'international' directs focus towards multilateral organisations, the RCRC Movement and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs). Local organisations, particularly an individual country's aid structures and CBOs, are important to an overall relief effort, but will not be the focus of this thesis as they tend not to be guided by the same global policy imperatives as more internationally focused organisations. Military organisations will not be considered as part of the international humanitarian system because of the contested place they currently hold in the provision of humanitarian aid.[42] Motives for military involvement in IHA are ambiguous and often compromised by political objectives and for this reason, military organisations have historically been excluded from being labelled humanitarian. This thesis will also follow this trend, noting that other actors are similarly likely to be influenced by political interests.

The international humanitarian system is also considered primarily to comprise humanitarian organisations operating under the humanitarian coordinator and cluster approach. This approach, implemented under the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Transformative Agenda, focuses on increasing the effectiveness of the international humanitarian system through better coordination, leadership and accountability.[43] This process was initiated in 2005 by UNOCHA's Emergency Relief Coordinator to incorporate lessons learned by the international humanitarian system in previous responses. There are two organisations that are exempted from this general rule: *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF) and the International

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[40] Peter Walker and Daniel Maxwell, *Shaping the Humanitarian World* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 5.
[41] Ibid.
[42] See, for example: Beat Schweizer, "Moral Dilemmas for Humanitarianism in the Era of "Humanitarian" Military Interventions," *International Review of the Red Cross* 86, no. 855 (2004).
[43] See: Inter-Agency Standing Committee. "IASC Principals: Transformative Agenda." http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/pageloader.aspx?page=content-template-default&bd=87, 2 September 2013.

Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).[44] For ideological reasons, related to perceptions of neutrality and independence in the humanitarian space, both have declined to be part of this system, although the ICRC does often participate in cluster and coordination discussions in an observer capacity.[45] However, because of the historic significance and continued role that both organisations play, they, along with local government and donor agencies, must also be included in this definition.

Analytical Framework/Approach

As outlined above, this thesis falls between several existing literatures, most notably those of FIR, humanitarian studies, and policy writing on gender in development and humanitarianism. The research seeks to establish itself between these literatures and contribute to a future 'critical international humanitarian studies'. Given this positioning, the thesis uses an eclectic post-positivist theoretical framework, in recognition of the cross-disciplinary nature of the subject matter. The project is primarily guided by critical feminist scholarship in IR, international development, security studies and global ethics, but also draws on other critical scholarship on gender in IR.[46] The research also draws from ethnographic research methodologies and non-feminist critical and constructivist traditions in IR.

Noting that within this approach there are many internal debates, critical feminist international relations (CFIR), which includes CFEC, broadly seeks to examine the relationship between knowledge and power. It works to uncover the ways in which knowledge (and agents of knowledge) has been constructed, whose interests have benefitted from its form and whose have been ignored or silenced. It explores the ways in which gender overlays these constructions of knowledge and power and attempts to go beyond them to provide space for,

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[44] See: MSF International, *What Relation to the "Aid System"?* (Geneva: MSF International, 2007); Angelo Gnaedinger, "Humanitarian Principles – the Importance of Their Preservation During Humanitarian Crises" (paper presented at the Humanitarian Aid in the Spotlight: Upcoming Challenges for European actors, Lisbon, 2007).

[45] Other components of the RCRC Movement, including the IFRC and local RCRC societies do participate in the cluster system.

[46] See, for example: Adam Jones, *Gender Inclusive: Essays on Violence, Men and Feminist International Relations* (London: Routledge, 2009). R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2005). R. Charli Carpenter, *Innocent Women and Children: Gender, Norms and the Protection of Civilians* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

and listen to, those gendered voices and identities that are silenced by mainstream ways of being and knowing. In accordance with CFIR's focus on subjective experiences and the fluidity of knowledge, I employ a qualitative methodology, focused on discourse, perception and a changeable understanding of human sociality and experience. In doing so, I acknowledge that meaning is assigned and constructed in the social world according to the dominant relations of power. CFIR is committed to challenging existing notions of what is right, true and unchangeable in IR and continually seeks to reform them in the interests of those who may be disadvantaged by these notions.

CFIR is strongly reflected in Ackerly and True's framework for feminist inquiry in IR and, for this reason, their framework is used to guide this research. Ackerly and True suggest that research should attend to four key areas. In Ackerly's words:

> -power in all of its visible and invisible forms;
>
> -boundaries and the potentials for exclusion, marginalization and inclusion to be incomplete or superficial;
>
> -relationships of power and obligation (between people in different parts of the global economy, between men and women, parents and children, researchers and research subject, reader and audience);
>
> -the role for self-reflexive humility in maintaining attentiveness to these three concerns.[47]

My research is underpinned by these four principles. Specifically, it looks to examine the way in which knowledge and agents of knowledge (about humanitarianism and gender) have been constructed and what relationships of power this represents. In approaching the project, the research continually reflects on how and why participants choose to represent themselves and their ideas in the way they do, what relationships of power and obligation these representations signify, and why certain ideas have been included and others excluded. Further, unspoken or silenced perspectives have been sought wherever possible – either

[47] Brooke Ackerly, "Feminist Methodological Reflection," in *Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide*, eds. Audie Klotz and Deepa Prakash (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 32.

through direct questioning or through alternative means. Finally, the thesis has attempted to maintain a critical self-reflectiveness at all times and question my role as researcher in the research dynamic, including what relationships of power might exist between the research subject and researcher.

This approach was preferred over others as it allowed an ethical and academically rigorous engagement with the research material. Feminist inquiry is often required to work across disciplines, and this is the case for this thesis. Positioned between several established and emerging academic paradigms, and amidst a strongly policy and practice-focused field, feminist inquiry offers a range of tools to work across specialities. Feminist inquiry is also often involved in forging new space and topics for discussion within established disciplines. This has certainly been true in IR and this thesis seeks to contribute to that project. The gendered nature of IHA has not yet been explored by FIR theorists in depth, yet is central to the experience of many persons who are aided by the international humanitarian system. It is also largely a product of this system. CFIR allows the boundaries of the IR discipline to be pushed to address this in a way that would be difficult if not impossible with other research approaches.

Method

The analytical framework has informed the use of several methods for the thesis. There is no singular feminist method for conducting research in IR and as such, in writing this thesis, I have followed the guidance of others in the field and embraced varied research methods.[48] These have included semi-structured interviews, participant observation, critical document analysis and comparative study.

Semi-structured Interviews

The core of my research project consists of semi-structured interviews focused on eliciting the perceptions and experiences of people involved in the provision and acceptance of humanitarian aid. This included interviews with aid recipients, staff of aid organisations, and

[48] Brooke Ackerly and Jacqui True, *Doing Feminist Research in Political and Social Science* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 32.

individuals involved in humanitarian responses in other roles (for example, donor agency staff and independent consultants). Over six months from March to August 2012, I conducted around 50 interviews – face-to-face in Australia, Papua New Guinea, Japan and Switzerland, and by phone in South Sudan. Interviews were recorded, except where participants did not consent to this (four interviews in total were not recorded) and were conducted in English, Japanese or Tok Pisin (with a translator). Recording of interviews was significant, as the way in which participants expressed their understandings of gender – the words they used, their ability to explicate policies and implementation procedures, as well as aid recipients' articulation of what gender and feminism meant to them and how it was relevant to their own lives – was vital for understanding the reasons why gender had been implemented in a given way. Interview duration was between thirty minutes and three hours, with most interviews lasting around one hour and thirty minutes. The specific detail of interviews conducted at each fieldwork site will be discussed further in the relevant chapters.

The use of semi-structured interviews is a common and respected research method within qualitative social sciences research, including in IR and feminist studies, and in the case of this thesis, was the most appropriate way for me to gather the bulk of the data needed. The ways in which those within the international humanitarian system operate on the ground and how understandings have been developed cannot easily be captured without direct discussion with individuals. Further, the research relies heavily on data that was gathered through an interview 'branching' technique through which particular issues of significance identified by either the researcher or participant could be explored in detail given the flexibility of the method. For example, different issues were uncovered to be important in the way an organisation and/or individual conceptualised and implemented gender depending on their organisational identity and mandate, their religion, cultural background, level of education, proximity to organisational headquarters and/or the field, and their own personal interest. Without the opportunity to pursue these 'branches', much valuable information would not have been obtained. Further, the format of semi-structured interviews allowed for subsequent interviews to build upon the responses of earlier interviewees and thereby accumulate a greater understanding of the overall situation in a given case. As such, the semi-structured interview

format allowed me to interview individuals, while at the same time viewing each as part of a greater 'discourse community'.[49] This became very important in understanding the dynamics of production and reproduction of ideas about gender and feminism within an organisation or relief context. It also allowed, in line with the feminist research ethic discussed above, an understanding of data collection (in this case, interviews) as 'dynamic events through which the identity of the subject was performed and co-constructed by interviewer and interviewee.'[50]

Participants were recruited through the 'snowball' technique. Initial contact was made either through pre-established contacts or by identifying and approaching individuals directly through organisational websites. Contacts then referred others who may have been interested in the research project. No aid recipients were approached directly and recipient communities were interviewed after referral, and in one case, in the presence of the referring agency. Within the aid delivery community, as far as was possible, participants from various levels and positions within an organisation were sought, as well as 'outsiders' to the organisation who would be able to comment on their experience working together on specific projects. Aid recipients were recommended by aid organisations and consisted mostly of community leaders or community members who also worked within the aid industry. Although the personal specificities of participants (for example, age, gender, cultural background) were noted for the study, a 'balance' was not sought, as I preferred instead to interview what I considered to be a more realistic representation of the make-up of the aid delivery community in the particular context. Further details about the make-up of participants will be provided in the case-specific discussions in the thesis.

Using semi-structured interviews as the focus of a comparative research project may be criticised for its inability to produce easily comparable data and/or provide representative data. While these criticisms are noted, the value of this method, for the reasons stated above, is considered to outweigh the benefits of a research method that may produce more easily

[49] Hugh Gusterson, "Ethnographic Research," in *Qualitative Methods in International Relations. A Pluralist Guide*, eds. Audie Klotz and Deepa Prakash (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 104.
[50] Ibid., 105.

comparable results (for example, survey data) or complete data sets. Further, care was taken to cover a set of core research questions at each interview to ensure a basis for comparison, in combination with exploration of more subjective areas of discussion. The project did not aspire to achieve a representative sample. The international humanitarian system is too big and dispersed to hope for such coverage. Instead, and in preference, case studies were carefully selected to provide coverage of major organisation types, disaster types and geographical locations involved in the international humanitarian system. As per Ackerly and True's reasoning, comparative analysis of this kind:

> ... can help us analyze the critical factors or path that has produced the outcome we seek to explain or understand. Such an approach to analysis may lead us to further our research on a given topic exploring new or additional research questions with a formal comparative case study design.[51]

Observation

Where possible, the research also included organisational observation. Most participant organisations did not agree to me conducting sustained participant observation. However, in meeting with individuals at their site of work and observing interactions between organisational staff, recipients and third parties, I was able to understand the perspectives of participants and organisational culture more fully. This research method, what ethnographic researcher Renato Rosaldo has termed 'deep hanging out',[52] enables a way to understand and experience the daily working lives of participants. Sustained contact also allows stronger relationships to be built between researcher and participant and with that, trust and openness. Although participant observation was not able to play as great a role as desired in the research for resource and confidentiality reasons, the observation that was possible greatly contextualised information received in interviews. Observation was particularly useful in discerning the differences between formal 'on the record' viewpoints and the reality of perspectives and implementation processes behind the scenes. This type of 'backstage' access

[51] Ackerly and True, *Doing Feminist Research in Political and Social Science*, 189.
[52] Cited in Gusterson, "Ethnographic Research," 99.

enabled me to see and analyse natural processes rather than having information censored for various reasons.

Methodological Difficulties

Research related to humanitarian crises and relief comes with inherent difficulties. Consequently, this thesis relies on both primary field data in the form of anecdotal accounts, with support from written sources, and observation, as outlined above. The methodological difficulties associated with this project have meant that there is some variation in the depth, type and reliability of data sources across the case studies. As such, the subsequent limits on the transferability of findings from this study are recognised. The research is nonetheless considered to be of great utility, while reflection on some of the methodological difficulties will shed greater light on the problems associated with conducting this type of research and inform future research directions and methods.

Firstly, in conducting this research, I encountered challenges in gaining access to recipients of humanitarian assistance. This occurred for both logistical reasons (security, transport, willingness of humanitarian agencies to allow access), and ethical reasons. Importantly, as noted earlier, I did not feel it was ethical to burden humanitarian agencies with hosting my stay in a crisis setting or expose affected populations to questioning where a crisis/relief effort was ongoing. Given the potentially sensitive nature of the issues to be discussed, and my lack of psychosocial training, I did not feel it appropriate to engage directly with recipient communities in an ongoing emergency state. Consequently, I was only able to interview affected populations in one of three case studies (and even here access was limited); thus, findings are biased towards the perspectives of humanitarian providers. This is problematic in terms of assessing the effectiveness of gender policy and programming. However, this thesis is focused on what determines the conceptualisation and implementation of gender in IHA and how gender work is performed primarily by humanitarian providers. As such, the effects of this bias for the research are minimised.

Secondly, several interviews were conducted in languages in which I am not fluent, with the assistance of a translator. This presented some challenges in ensuring the accuracy of the material I would later transcribe, and that the intended meaning of the questions was reaching research participants. Further discussion of the individual issues encountered at each site will be discussed in the relevant case study chapters. In short, however, the lack of ability to ensure the accuracy of translations and my unfamiliarity with the cultural context of the language meant that I may have missed some subtleties in the communication. I was also unable to utilise all available written material. I attempted to alleviate this by engaging translators who were both native speakers of the local language and users of English in their professional lives. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind, as anthropologist Herbert Phillips suggested, that 'almost any utterance in any language carries with it a set of assumptions, feelings and values that the speaker may or may not be aware of but that the fieldworker, as an outsider, usually is not.'[53] Similarly, I carry with me my own set of assumptions, feeling and values, as does my interpreter, both of which may influence my own understanding and analysis of research findings.

Thirdly, in some cases, research participants represented organisational interests and this constrained their comments. These constraints also related to the relationships of power both within organisations, and between organisations and recipient communities and other agents in the international humanitarian system. Participants were consequently cautious in the information they contributed to the research. As organisational reputation is important both for securing donor funding and for acquiring humanitarian access and host government support, participants were at times reluctant to stray from official policy lines in interviews. Issues of access also reduced my ability to speak directly with people who are involved in the provision of the assistance in the aid recipient country. This was particularly so with the South Sudan case study, where I was restricted to interviews at headquarters in Geneva and off-site correspondence. The differences in the proximity of participants to the respective crisis setting

[53] Herbert Phillips, "Problems of Translation and Meaning in Fieldwork," in *Human Organization Research: Field Relations and Techniques*, eds. Richard N. Adams and Jack J. Preiss (Homewood: Dorsey Press, 1960), 291.

meant that data obtained from the different fieldwork sites was not always consistent in type across cases. Participants at headquarters also seemed much more concerned about and aware of the potential impact of their perspectives being published. They seemed also to be more cognisant of the potential personal ramifications of their participation. Likely for this reason, with some exceptions, participation at headquarters was restricted (by organisations) to lower level staff members who may not have had access to the same level of information as more senior officers. Nevertheless, these perspectives are considered highly valuable as they provide insight into the daily operations of humanitarian organisations at working level rather than strategic policy level thinking which is more readily available through public documents.

Significance

The gendered effects of humanitarian crises for affected populations can be devastating. Vulnerabilities existing in a society at the onset of a crisis are often exacerbated in the increased insecurity that follows. Rates of violence often increase; equal access to necessary relief goods is rarely achieved; and psychological wellbeing can be severely affected. Each of these issues, and many others, are gendered and affect different gendered identities in different ways and to varying degrees.[54] The priority afforded to each relief need and the system that provides it are also gendered.[55] These facts are the most important testimonies to the significance of this research. For humanitarian aid to be effective for all people, the gendered nature and effects of a humanitarian crisis must be considered comprehensively and appropriately by and in the international humanitarian system. Although progress has been made in this direction, gender policy and programming in IHA still suffers from severe shortcomings.[56] This is despite the overwhelming discursive support for attention to gender issues in the international humanitarian system, including through individual organisational policies and documents, international frameworks such as the IASC Gender Guidelines and the Sphere Standards.

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[54] Inter-Agency Standing Committee, "Women, Girls, Boys and Men: Different Needs – Equal Opportunities. Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action." 5-6.
[55] This will be discussed in detail throughout the thesis.
[56] These will be highlighted particularly in *Chapters Three, Four and Five*.

The research is also significant from an academic standpoint with FIR scholars, and specifically CFIR scholars, so far having little direct engagement with issues regarding gender in IHA. As noted above, although FIR has produced a large body of related literature, there has been little consideration by FIR scholars of how the ideas and progress made in these fields translate directly into the context of IHA. This is not to say that there has been no feminist writing on gender in IHA. However, the majority of writings and commentary have come either from practitioners or from other academic fields including sociology, anthropology, development studies and human geography. The attempt in this thesis to bridge a gap in this scholarship, by bringing a CFIR perspective into the discussion, is significant. As a stand-alone field, humanitarian studies is also still developing. As such, while there has been some discussion concerning the transfer of policies and ideas conceived in the development field into the specific context of humanitarianism,[57] this requires further investigation. This is particularly true of gender as a defined policy area that has political contingencies.

The thesis provides a comparative analysis of gender in IHA between different contexts and between humanitarian responses in regions with different levels of development. This is significant because although there have been some comparative studies on gender policies within agencies, within regions and even between countries with similar development indicators, at the time of writing in early 2014, to my knowledge there has not yet been a study that includes a developed country in this type of comparative analysis. This research considers the importance of a recipient nation's position within the broader international system for understanding how and why policies and practices are implemented in particular humanitarian contexts. In doing so, the research positions itself appropriately to comment on the utility of global frameworks.

Finally, this research is significant because each of the case studies examined occurred relatively recently. At this time, there has been little international attention on the gendered

[57] See, for example: Margaret Buchanan-Smith and Simon Maxwell, "Linking Relief and Development: An Introduction and Overview," *IDS Bulletin* 25, no. 4 (2009). Joanna Macrae and Adele Harmer, *Beyond the Continuum: The Changing Role of Aid Policy in Protracted Crises*, vol. 18 (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2004).

effects of the respective crises and/or the humanitarian responses to this. The case studies will therefore also contribute to a gap in academic reporting on these events.

Thesis Outline

The thesis is organised into three parts. *Part One* questions how gender and feminism fit within the theory and policy of IHA. *Chapter One* concentrates on IHA as an emerging but still immature sub-discipline of IR. It provides an outline of where IHA sits within the ethical 'grand debate' of IR – that between cosmopolitanism and communitarianism. Within this debate, the chapter explores how feminist insights and arguments have contributed to the discussion, and how they fit more broadly within debates on IHA in IR. *Chapter Two* outlines the parallel development of IHA in IR in the worlds of policy and practice. Here, the thesis focuses on the development of humanitarian policy and practice and the major debates in contemporary and historical IHA, questioning how considerations of gender fit within these. Together, the chapters of *Part One* frame the remainder of the thesis which looks to how these debates and circumstances interact with conditions in the field to influence the implementation and conceptualisation of gender policy and programming.

Part Two presents the three case studies in separate chapters. The case study chapters comprise the empirical core of the thesis and provide the basis for the comparative analysis and arguments to be pursued in *Part Three* of the thesis. The three case studies were purposefully chosen to demonstrate the diversity of IHA and represent the broad range of humanitarian issues and implementing agencies comprising the international humanitarian system. The case studies cover three key emergency types (displacement, disease and disaster); three regions of the world (Africa, Pacific and Asia); and three organisation types (United Nations organisations, international non-governmental organisations, and RCRC Movement organisations); and look at three recipient countries with very different levels of development, holding varying levels of power and influence in the international system and the international humanitarian system. The selection of case studies was also informed by logistical issues. Having worked within the Australian aid industry for several years, I had pre-existing professional contacts in two of the three case study sites selected (South Sudan and

Papua New Guinea). The third case study (Japan) was chosen because I was familiar with the site, had visited several times, and had personal contacts who were able to assist me with making the necessary connections for the fieldwork.

Chapter Three focuses on UNHCR's work in South Sudan following the nation gaining independence in July 2011. UNHCR has both a protection mandate and one of the more advanced and well-articulated global gender policies. As such, the chapter analyses a context where gender work should be relatively effective. *Chapter Four* focuses on the INGO response to the cholera outbreak in Papua New Guinea in 2009–2011, with particular emphasis on World Vision's response to the outbreak in Madang Province in 2009 and 2010. The chapter assesses rhetoric and action around integrating gender into this relatively small-scale relief effort to a nevertheless urgent national health emergency. *Chapter Five* examines a comprehensive response to a large-scale disaster and focuses on the RCRC Movement's humanitarian programs following the GEJET of March 2011. The chapter questions why there was no overt reference to gender in the rhetoric or programming of the lead RCRC organisation – the Japanese Red Cross Society (JRCS). The three case study chapters provide insight into both the diversity of gendered issues present in humanitarian programming and the divergence in gender's conceptualisation and implementation. They highlight the continued dominance of liberal feminist principles in the implementation of gender policy and frequent diversion between policy and practice. Each case study chapter concludes by offering an analysis of what a response grounded in a CFEC might look like, and how this might improve gender work.

Part Three present a comparative analysis of the three case studies. It suggests that the conceptualisation and implementation of gender is influenced by situational, institutional and discursive dynamics that leave it with a limited ability to effect positive impacts for aid recipients. *Chapter Six* argues that the three interrelated factors examined through the case studies, along with the wider gendered history and theory of IHA discussed in *Part One*, are central to understanding these dynamics. Together, they produce an uneven conceptualisation and implementation of gender policy across contexts and leave gender work in danger of being

deprioritised and pursued without transformative potential or intent. The underpinning theoretical framework for gender work in IHA is inappropriate and ineffective in the current international humanitarian system. As a result, *Chapter Six* advocates for a reframing of gender work in IHA to align with the principles of a CFEC. Following on from this, the *Conclusion* questions what these factors mean for the future of gender in IHA. Revisiting the recurring themes of the thesis, the *Conclusion* suggests that gender work in the humanitarian space would benefit from a commitment to a practical CFEC, and provides recommendations for initiating this change.

PART ONE

Chapter One:

Ethics and Theory: the Hidden Role of Gender and Feminism in International Relations and International Humanitarian Assistance

> A feminist theory bumper sticker might say, "Nothing is natural – well almost nothing." As one learns to look at this world through feminist eyes, one learns to ask whether anything that passes for inevitable, inherent, 'traditional' or biological has in fact been *made* ... The presumption that something that gives shape to how we live with one another is inevitable, a "given", is hard to dislodge. It seems easier to imagine that something oozes up from an indeterminate past, that it has never been deliberately concocted, does not need to be maintained, that it's just there ...[1]

The theory and practice of social relations are gendered. If we accept that theory informs action and action informs theory, as a social practice, international humanitarian assistance (IHA) is thereby a gendered phenomenon, informed by (and informing) gendered theory(ies). Like other international social practices, IHA is positioned in a cross-disciplinary space, amongst (non-exclusively) international relations (IR), global ethics, sociology, anthropology, development studies and international law. Each field has influenced and informed IHA's current conceptual form and implementation. This chapter asks: 'in what ways are the IR theories that inform IHA gendered?' In answering this question I will seek to uncover the ways in which the traditions of IR have informed IHA and in doing so have theorised gender, both explicitly and implicitly. This will also reveal how IR theories have gendered the construction of debates about IHA. In doing this, the objective of this chapter is to provide a framework for discussion of the gendered policy and practice of IHA in *Chapters Two* to *Five*.

This chapter is structured as follows. To begin, some historical context for the development of IHA theory and background to the general principles guiding gendered analysis is provided. This frames the analysis to follow, which focuses primarily on the debate between cosmopolitan and communitarian theories of IR as they relate to IHA. This debate is first considered at face value, and then examined further through an analysis of gender and culture. The chapter then presents some brief comments about the possibility and desirability

[1] Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, 3.

of an alternative feminist approach driving theories on IHA. Ultimately, the chapter argues that the dominant theories of IR and IHA are profoundly gendered, with great effects for the operationalisation of these theories through the policies and practices of IHA.

A few caveats and definitions are needed in anticipation of the main discussion of this chapter. First, this chapter is limited to what this thesis considers to be the main debate in IR theory related to IHA – that between cosmopolitanism and communitarianism. This is not to suggest that other approaches are not relevant, but it highlights the importance of this debate over others in this space. Similarly, within each of these theoretical approaches, there are many variants. A critical cosmopolitan agenda, for example, has been advocated by several prominent theorists over the past decade.[2] The arguments made in this chapter are not always relevant to these alternative strands of cosmopolitanism. Instead, they focus on a particular dominant strand of liberal cosmopolitanism, defined by its general agreements with liberal internationalist priorities,[3] but separated from it by a commitment to privilege a global order which governs both the internal and external behaviour of states. Simply, liberal cosmopolitanism perceives sovereignty not as an absolute right, but as being dependent on the upholding of liberal principles, and desires a cosmopolitan world order, where citizens are able to protect their human rights against states, if necessary.[4] Likewise, communitarianism has many forms. This thesis, however, uses the concept to refer to communitarian-realism, a term used to indicate the particular state centricity of the dominant form of communitarianism discussed in IR theory.[5] Second, it is also worth noting the prominence and context of debates around humanitarianism in mainstream IR theory. Until recently, IR theorists, including feminist international relations (FIR) theorists, have afforded relatively little direct attention to IHA. Although this is changing with the work of scholars such as

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[2] See, for example: Gerard Delanty, "The Cosmopolitan Imagination: Critical Cosmopolitanism and Social Theory," *The British Journal of Sociology* 57, no. 1 (2006).

[3] For example, individual human rights and a single humanity, liberal-style democracy, the development of universal international law and institutions to implement this law.

[4] Peter Gowan, "The New Liberal Cosmopolitanism," *IWM Working Paper* 2(2000), http://www.geocities.ws/gennarolasca/liberalcosmopolitanism.pdf, 5 September 2013.

[5] This term is borrowed from Toni Erskine who uses it to distinguish the particular brand of communitarianism found in IR though from its counterpart in political theory. Toni Erskine, "Normative IR Theory," in *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, eds. Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, and Steve Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 43.

Michael Barnett, IHA remains immature and underdeveloped as a distinct academic sub-discipline within IR. Few scholars have made an explicit connection between IHA and IR theory and those works that have emerged focus instead primarily on issues of sovereignty as they relate to international military humanitarian intervention (IMHI), international human rights discourse (particularly in international law, human security and ideas of cosmopolitan citizenship). As a result, the grand debate to be discussed here is necessarily state-focused. Again, the thesis does not suggest in this focus that non-state actors are insignificant, but merely that states have been and continue to be the primary focus of the IR discipline. Importantly, the context of debates concerning IHA has changed markedly since the end of the Cold War, and further since the commencement of the 'War on Terror'. The demise of bipolarity allowed for a reinvigoration of the United Nations Security Council's role in humanitarian action and the emergence of a strong discourse of international community and cosmopolitan citizenship. Yet, traditional preoccupations of a conservative international system continue to underpin action and discourse. Significantly, direct state involvement in humanitarian action has increased markedly, impacting on a traditional non-governmental (NGO)/private sphere activity. Added to this is the nature of 'new wars';[6] the prevalence of 'complex emergencies'[7] in the 21st century; the expansive humanitarian architecture and number of actors; the fragmentation of the concept itself; and the increasingly explicit politicisation of humanitarian aid. It becomes difficult to draw firm conclusions about the effects and role of IR theory on broader discussions of IHA. With this in mind, this chapter will seek to draw more explicit connections between IR theory(ies) and IHA *per se* drawing on this existing work. It makes a further modest contribution to the literature by mapping gender within this discussion.

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[6] See: Mary Kaldor, *New & Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006).

[7] The term 'complex emergency' was first coined in the late 1980s to refer to the situation in Mozambique, where armed conflict and periodic natural disasters were simultaneously affecting the country. It is now commonly used in emergencies with multi-causality, particularly when this includes a breakdown in political authority, involves conflict, and requires the expertise of several humanitarian actors.

Theory, Objectivity and Gender

Mainstream scholars of IR have often promoted and represented theory as being scientific, value-free, objective and neutral. Robert Cox and others have described this claim to theoretical impartiality as positivist: a desire to solve problems within existing political systems, thereby maintaining those systems as the status quo. Positivist theoretical frameworks take 'the world as [they find] it, with the prevailing social and power relationships into which they are organized, as the given framework for action ... [aiming] to make these relationships and institutions work smoothly by dealing effectively with particular sources of trouble.'[8] The traditional IR theories that have governed IHA's development sit strongly within such positivist frameworks.

Reflection on the act of theorising, however, exposes the potential and power of theory to work not only within existing systems but also to sustain and create social order and knowledge. As Cynthia Enloe hints in the quote at the start of this chapter, theory is rarely as conveniently detached from its subject and agent as is promoted by mainstream scholars of social science. Rather, consciously or subconsciously, positivist theories serve to reinforce and reify structures, systems and discourses which are represented as foundational truths of IR – truths that may more appropriately be understood as belief systems, constructed and subjective. As such, rather than an act independent of the theorist's own prejudices and context, theory should more appropriately be understood as an interpretive and personal practice. Seeing it as such challenges the many assumptions of 'truth' and 'reality' in mainstream scholarship and, indeed, notions about the role of theory in IR. It becomes apparent that theory shapes both what we can 'know' about the world and how it is possible for us to 'know' it. Through the act of theorising, theory becomes constitutive of knowledge itself.[9]

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[8] Robert Cox, "Social Forces, States, and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory (1981)," in *Approaches to World Order*, eds. Robert Cox and Timothy Sinclair (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 88.

[9] Laura J. Shepherd, "Sex or Gender? Bodies in World Politics and Why Gender Matters," in *Gender Matters in Global Politics. A Feminist Introduction to International Relations*, ed. Laura J. Shepherd (London: Routledge, 2010), 4.

In the introduction to her recent edited book *Gender Matters in Global Politics,* Laura Shepherd informs her reader that 'everyone has a theory of gender.'[10] If it is accepted that through the act of theorising, both the theorist and the theory implicitly (or explicitly) effect and affect reality, gender becomes integral to all theory and acts of theorising. As gendered beings living in gendered national and international societies,[11] 'gender' as an identity and social construct is theorised and expressed daily (whether consciously or subconsciously) during practical and theoretical engagement in social and international life. Thus, it becomes impossible to abstract gender from social context or to separate social interactions, structures, discourses and theories of IR from the ways in which gender informs them and contributes to their constructions. As Shepherd points out, *'global politics is studied and practised by gendered bodies.'*[12] IR theory should be seen as a product of gendered experiences and understandings of and interactions in (international/national) societies. More specifically, it should be seen as a product of the experiences, understandings and interactions of particular gendered individuals and groups: those that hold privileged and legitimated knowledge-making positions in societies. In short, mainstream IR theory should be seen as the product of dominant hegemonic (hetero-normative), western, masculine bodies. Following this logic, it becomes apparent that the experiences, understandings and interactions of other gendered beings may not be represented appropriately by dominant theoretical traditions in IR, including as it relates to IHA. With these ideas in mind, the history and development of IHA through IR theory diverges somewhat from the familiar tale of neutrality, impartiality and independence.[13]

Religion, Enlightenment and the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement

Humanitarian ideals are not new. They have a rich and diverse theoretical and ideological evolution, dating to the beginning of many different recorded histories.[14] Reference to the humanitarian impulse – a moral obligation and desire to help strangers in need – is found in

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[10] Ibid., 3.
[11] For further discussion of this, see: Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation* (London: SAGE, 2006).
[12] Shepherd, "Sex or Gender? Bodies in World Politics and Why Gender Matters," 6. Emphasis in original.
[13] These are three of the four Foundational Principles of the RCRC Movement. For further detail, see *Chapter Two*.
[14] Walker and Maxwell, *Shaping the Humanitarian World*, 13.

the texts of many cultural and national traditions. In 23 BCE Egypt, for example, 'humanitarian' endeavours were celebrated on the tomb inscription of Harkhuf, a well-respected Governor of Upper Egypt: 'I gave bread to the hungry, clothing to the naked, I ferried him who had no boat.'[15] Similar instances of state support for victims of famine and war are recorded in ancient China, Greece and Rome.[16]

The IHA tradition dominant in IR today does, however, have a more distinct lineage.[17] Expressed primarily through the frame of cosmopolitan responsibility, this particular strand of humanitarian ethics and theory finds its roots in the interaction of Judeo-Christian religious thought and the Enlightenment philosophy of the late 18th and early 19th centuries.[18] Enlightenment thinking offered a normative push for the ideal that 'every singular human being is worthy of equal moral concern and ought to have an allegiance to the community of humankind.'[19] Individual thinkers nuanced such ideas. Jean-Jacques Rousseau noted in 1754 that 'compassion is a natural feeling, which ... contributes to the preservation of the whole species'[20] and Adam Smith, in his 1853 *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, points to an inherent human desire to help those in need: 'How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it, except the pleasure of seeing it.'[21] Immanuel Kant more instructively offered, in his idea of a categorical imperative, '[a]ct only on the maxim through which you can at the same time will that it shall become a universal law.'[22] Religious discourses, likewise, have been heavily involved in the promotion of ideas of charity for 'fellow man'. As Barnett highlights, Christian reform movements were

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[15] Cited in ibid.
[16] Ibid., 14.
[17] As noted in the *Introduction*, this discussion has a strong western bias as a result of the dominant position this tradition holds on the international stage in the current era.
[18] Michael Barnett, "Humanitarianism as a Scholarly Vocation," in *Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics*, eds. Michael Barnett and Thomas G. Weiss (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 246. As a moral ideal, relevant thought is also apparent in the writings of ancient Cynics and Stoics philosophers.
[19] Magdalena Nowicka and Maria Rovisco, "Introduction: Making Sense of Cosmopolitanism," in *Cosmopolitanism in Practice*, eds. Magdalena Nowicka and Maria Rovisco (Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), 2.
[20] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality* (Whitefish: Kessinger Publishing, 2004), 35.
[21] Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Norderstedt: GRIN, 2009), 8.
[22] Cited in Andrew Linklater, *Men and Citizens in the Theory of International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1990), 100.

instrumental in the promotion, institutionalisation and internationalisation of humanitarian agendas – from the rhetoric of 'humanity' and the 'family of man', to the discourse of individual liberty and human rights.[23] Despite evidence of humanitarian ideals being present in multiple religious traditions and arguably universally appealing, Craig Calhoun argues that the role of Christianity in the evolution and operationalisation of humanitarian norms has been more significant than other religious traditions.[24]

Humanitarian policy and practice evolved with a similar cultural heritage and has been guided by analogous ethical and moral perspectives. IHA's policy and practice will be the focus of *Chapter Two*. However, it is important to note here that these ethical and moral perspectives are complementary to discussions of IHA theory, and amongst many audiences are central to them. In line with humanitarianism's foundational movement, that of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), legitimate humanitarian action has traditionally been defined by allegiance to four core principles: humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence.[25] The four core principles, otherwise known as the ICRC principles, are considered essential in securing safe humanitarian space[26] for the provision of aid. Importantly, they emphasise the moral equivalence (sameness) of all aid recipients and, in theory, of humanitarian providers and beneficiaries. By assuming a position of impartiality and neutrality, the core principles reinforce earlier Enlightenment ideas of universal morality and a singular humanity and support a cosmopolitan world order.[27] Further, the Red Cross Red

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[23] Michael Barnett and Thomas Weiss, "Humanitarianism: A Brief History of the Present," in *Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics*, eds. Michael Barnett and Thomas Weiss (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 19.

[24] Craig Calhoun, "The Imperative to Reduce Suffering: Charity, Progress and Emergencies in the Field of Humanitarian Action," in *Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics.*, eds. Michael Barnett and Thomas G. Weiss (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 85.

[25] Originally seven principles were identified, including voluntary service, unity and universality. The first four, however, are considered to constitute the 'core' of humanitarianism and feature most prominently in policy documents. Michael Barnett and Thomas G. Weiss, "Humanitarianism: A Brief History of the Present," in *Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics.*, eds. Michael Barnett and Thomas G. Weiss (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 3-4.

[26] For this thesis, the term 'humanitarian space' refers to the physical arena in which international aid agencies can deliver humanitarian assistance to populations in need without jeopardising the security of their staff and supplies.

[27] There are many diverse perspectives on what a true cosmopolitan world order should comprise. While acknowledging this, for the purposes of this thesis the cosmopolitan world order will be defined conventionally according to the ideas supported by mainstream political liberal cosmopolitanism. In this understanding, a cosmopolitan world order is supported by supranational and transnational

Crescent (RCRC) Movement, originally a Swiss national movement, has strengthened the Western European influence on IHA's origins. While the utility of and adherence to these principles is debated in the contemporary era,[28] their place in humanitarian discourse ensures their continued relevance for this discussion. As noted, these ideas are particularly relevant for the discussion of IHA policy and practice in *Chapter Two*. For the purposes of this chapter, however, it is important to note that these ideas and those guiding the cosmopolitan world order are mutually reinforcing.

As the subject of a spatially, temporally and culturally derived debate, IHA cannot be understood as a universally representative concept. Although arguably holding widespread appeal, its theoretical construction, problems and perspective are a product of certain theoretical and actual communities – that of the Enlightenment's rational man, his Judeo-Christian ancestors and his cosmopolitan descendants (including the founders of the ICRC). Contemporary debates in IR regarding the appropriate roles, obligations and responsibilities of the international community to deliver humanitarian assistance are equally bound. As the following section will demonstrate they reflect the preoccupations of a distinct political community, one that has both a western and masculine bias. This chapter will suggest that these preoccupations flow from, reinforce and are essentially the same as those of the (gendered) mainstream IR discipline.

Barnett argues that these contemporary debates follow the preoccupations of two major concerns in IR theory: the contest between ideas of (international) community amidst a reality of diversity; and a desire for emancipation amidst relationships of power.[29] In general terms, these ideas are reflected in two collections of mainstream IR thought. In the first collection are those theories and ethical traditions that privilege the former over the latter, highlighting the value of individual security over international order. Included here are cosmopolitanism,

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governance, a robust global civil society and a global legal order. These mechanisms can be understood as '... the institutional embodiment of cosmopolitan values of equality, solidarity and human rights, as well as the expressions of a universal political consensus.' Nowicka and Rovisco, "Introduction: Making Sense of Cosmopolitanism," 4-5.

[28] This point will be discussed further in *Chapter Two*.

[29] Barnett, "Humanitarianism as a Scholarly Vocation," 241.

liberalism, solidarism and their variants. In the second collection are those traditions that privilege ideas of diversity, power and order, and the state's responsibility (only) to its citizens. The apparent 'anarchic' nature of the international system is recognised by these approaches, which includes communitarianism, realism and pluralism. The division between these two groups also coincides with conflicting conceptions of sovereignty in the international sphere.[30] As a result of the prominence of cosmopolitan and communitarian theorists in this debate, the remainder of this chapter focuses on uncovering the gendered bodies and constructions within this binary both historically and in contemporary debates. This is done with reference to the particularities of the other abovementioned paradigms, including global ethics and international humanitarian law.

The Main Debate: Cosmopolitanism vs Communitarianism

Debates in IR theory regarding rationales for and obligations to provide IHA are usually framed as a debate between cosmopolitan and communitarian ethics.[31] The cosmopolitan/ communitarian divide can most easily (though imperfectly) be described as the corresponding ethical equivalent of IR's 'first debate' between realism and liberalism (idealism).[32] Although this comparison is simplistic and glosses over many nuances, it is useful in uncovering the general principles of the debate. As the tension between these two powerful traditions remains unresolved in other areas of IR, so too does it remain unresolved in the humanitarian sector. Yet, as this chapter argues, this dichotomy is far less pronounced in practice than often presented in discourse. A brief overview of these two major schools demonstrates how they position themselves in relation to recipients of humanitarian aid (both states and individuals) and conceptualise, account for and are (in)congruous with IHA. This chapter shows, through a gendered analysis, how the two are, in fact, analogous. Specifically, they exist within the same

[30] This debate has most prominently been associated with the recent release of the *Responsibility to Protect* report. For details of the evolution of this debate see: Francis Deng, "From 'Sovereignty as Responsibility' to the 'Responsibility to Protect'," *Global Responsibility to Protect* 2, no. 4 (2010).
[31] Jacinta O'Hagan, "Humanitarianism and Armed Intervention," in *An Intoduction to International Relations. Australian Perspectives*, eds. Richard Devetak, Anthony Burke, and Jim George (Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 329.
[32] Hakan Seckinelgin and Hideaki Shinoda, "Introduction: Beyond Dichotomies," in *Ethics and International Relations*, eds. Hakan Seckinelgin and Hideaki Shinoda (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 3.

positivist and gendered frameworks and have been produced from within the same cultural community.

Cosmopolitanism

Humanitarian ideals are most often associated with the cosmopolitan school of thought. They resonate with a cosmopolitan world order and are underpinned by an ethical responsibility to the other, regardless of their location. The constitutive principles of the ICRC, the premier humanitarian aid agency – humanity and impartiality – mirror the core principles of cosmopolitanism and, indeed, the expansion of the humanitarian industry is often considered to be a triumph of the cosmopolitan conscience.[33] Having the primary motivation of caring for 'common humanity' and placing the individual at the centre of security considerations, humanitarianism can be seen at its most basic level to be representing a cosmopolitan ethics.[34]

Broadly speaking,[35] traditional IR theorists can be defined as either holding a basic cosmopolitan outlook or anti-cosmopolitan (in this instance, communitarian) values.[36] Primarily separating these two subsets are the theorists' understanding of 'community' and its limitations. Few theorists would suggest that human beings have no ethical responsibilities to assist fellow human beings. They differ instead in their definition of the extent of this responsibility. Cosmopolitanism conceptualises this responsibility as universal; that is, it understands all human beings as belonging to a single moral community (humanity).[37] Our responsibility for the wellbeing of others thus extends to all peoples globally, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, mental or physical capacity and/or other identity markers. As all human beings are considered members of a single moral community, morality itself becomes characterised by reciprocity, mutual obligation and global applicability – rights and

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[33] Calhoun, "The Imperative to Reduce Suffering: Charity, Progress and Emergencies in the Field of Humanitarian Action," 85.
[34] Richard Shapcott, *International Ethics: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), 124.
[35] It is recognised that major schools of IR thought contain a number of strands.
[36] Shapcott, *International Ethics: A Critical Introduction*, 8.
[37] It should be noted that while cosmopolitan ideals have a long history – Stoics forwarded a cosmopolitan view of world citizenship in Ancient times, for example – these ideals were by and large applied only to the supposed 'civilised world' not to the members of the more complete 'world community' we understand today. Calhoun, "The Imperative to Reduce Suffering: Charity, Progress and Emergencies in the Field of Humanitarian Action," 76.

obligations are exercised in the community of humanity rather than within the confines of the state.[38] Because each member of the international community is of equal moral worth, humanitarian acts based on a cosmopolitan ethical foundation should also examine the needs of all persons affected by a given humanitarian disaster. Cosmopolitan theorists hold that all world communities (states), regardless of differences, can and have agreed upon moral standards that should be applied and upheld globally.[39]

Cosmopolitanism has many strands. The theoretical lineage of each varies slightly and emphasises different ideals. While the fundamental claim that humans are bound together in a single moral community prevails, the relations and obligations within this moral community are disputed, as is cosmopolitanism's purpose and its framing as either a moral ideal or a framework for action.[40] Magdalena Nowicka and Maria Rovisco outline three major perspectives of cosmopolitanism: moral cosmopolitanism, political cosmopolitanism and cultural cosmopolitanism, with three distinct parallel developments.[41] Each has some relevance to IR as a discipline and IHA as a sub-discipline. For the most part, IR scholars have focused their writing within the boundaries of political cosmopolitanism framing cosmopolitanism as '... an ethico-political ideal that seeks to respond to the limitations of the nation-state unit in addressing global challenges and problems.'[42] Cosmopolitanism is framed as an ethico-political project of change. It is focused on building and supporting global civil society as well as encouraging the emergence of new forms of transnational/supranational governance and action to challenge the monopoly of the nation-state system. Inspired by Kant's writings on perpetual peace,[43] the project of political cosmopolitanism has included calling for institutional formalisation and universalisation of cosmopolitan (and humanitarian) values such as those mentioned earlier. Most notably, these ideas draw on Kant's conceptions of reason and duty and are demonstrated 'in man's capacity for moral self-direction (autonomy) and his intrinsic quality as a supremely free agent who, when rid of dependence

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[38] Shapcott, *International Ethics: A Critical Introduction*, 8.
[39] Alex J. Bellamy, "Humanitarian Responsibilities and Interventionist Claims in International Society," *Review of International Studies* 29 (2003): 324.
[40] Nowicka and Rovisco, "Introduction: Making Sense of Cosmopolitanism," 2.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid., 4.
[43] See: Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Essay* (New York: Cosimo, 2010).

and oppression, is clearly able to see, by virtue of his reason, where his moral duty lies.'[44] Thus, it is among a universal community of 'rational autonomous beings' that the cosmopolitan vision may be achieved.[45] As Janna Thompson argues, in this ideal system, there is no moral favouritism based on geographical location or nationality for any one human being over another.[46] The cosmopolitan sentiment is well expressed by Kant's understanding of 'universal community' in which 'a violation of right in one part of the world is felt all over it.'[47] Fundamentally, cosmopolitanism purports a normative ideal in which all humans are morally equivalent and morally responsible to one another. An essential humanness should always prevail over particular interests and/or identities – impartiality in action and judgement is central.[48]

As cosmopolitan theory has modernised and been applied directly within IR's disciplinary boundaries, it has played a key role in challenging the assumptions of realism – IR's flagship theory. Primarily, it has sought to break down the realist divide between domestic and international, challenging the anarchic conception of the realist international arena.[49] Cosmopolitanism challenges the naturalness and absoluteness of the realist state system, seeing it as historically contingent rather than unchangeable.[50] Although, as a moral position, cosmopolitanism does not necessarily entail an imperative for international political change; when applied in the realm of IR, political duties and responsibilities ensue, both at the individual and collective level. Many IR scholars sympathetic to cosmopolitanism see it as an effective way to challenge the limitations of the prevailing state-based international order and move past concerns about sovereignty to tackle global problems supranationally. Most notably, this includes facilitating a robust global civil society and fostering international legal

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[44] Fiona Robinson, "Exploring Social Relations, Understanding Power, and Valuing Care: The Role of Critical Feminist Ethics in International Relations Theory," in *Ethics and International Relations*, eds. Hakan Seckinelgin and Hideaki Shinoda (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 67.

[45] Lorraine Elliott, "Cosmopolitan Ethics and Militaries as 'Forces for Good'," in *Forces for Good: Cosmopolitan Militaries in the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Lorraine Elliott and Graeme Cheeseman (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 18.

[46] Janna Thompson, "Planetary Citizenship: The Definition and Defence of an Ideal," in *Governing for the Environment: Global Problems, Ethics and Democracy*, eds. Brendan Gleeson and Nicholas Low (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 139.

[47] Kant, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Essay*, 20.

[48] Nowicka and Rovisco, "Introduction: Making Sense of Cosmopolitanism," 2.

[49] Robert Fine, *Cosmopolitanism* (Oxon: Routledge, 2007), 3.

[50] Ibid.

and political governance through the United Nations (UN) and the international human rights and refugee protection frameworks. Some authors also promote the necessity of moving from the realist state as the primary unit of analysis in international politics, arguing that culture, identity, security and morality are not confined or defined by national boundaries. Ulrich Beck, for example, suggests that this will allow thought to move past the '... nationally centred ontology and imagination dominating thought and action.'[51]

At the level of the individual citizen, authors such as Seyla Benhabib also emphasise the requirement of an ethical change in the way (inter)national citizens view and act towards other geographically distant citizens, for any type of cosmopolitan world order to be effective.[52] In theory, the historical divisions between local and global, self and other, and inside and outside, which are reliant on state boundaries, must be both pluralised and reconciled, allowing difference to also be recognised as connectedness. Kate Nash notes the need for individuals in disparate locations to be able to identify with a given system for it to be globally relevant.[53]

Theories of security at the forefront of IR have traditionally focused on state borders (national security) and the military defence of defined territorial spaces. Governed by a realist conception of international order – an anarchical collection of entities with interactions governed by self-interested protectionism and traditional conceptions of security have ignored individual security needs insofar as they exist beyond or outside state borders. Cosmopolitan ideas have influenced a (still controversial) redefinition of international security as human security. Human security repositions the individual as referent object for security, usually in addition to the state. Understanding the individual's security as being dependent on personal 'freedom from want' and 'freedom from fear', the human security movement is strongly supportive of humanitarian ideals.[54] Cosmopolitan values have become (unevenly)

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[51] Ulrich Beck, "Cosmopolitan Realism: On the Distinction between Cosmopolitanism in Philosophy and the Social Sciences," *Global Networks* 4, no. 2 (2004): 132.

[52] Seyla Benhabib, *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 183.

[53] Kate Nash, "Political Culture, Ethical Cosmopolitanism and Cosmopolitan Democracy," *Cultural Politics* 2, no. 2 (2006).

[54] Human security, like humanitarianism, has a number of problematic internal contradictions and its understanding and application is highly dependent on the political/ethical space occupied by the

institutionalised in humanitarian discourse. Barnett and Weiss argue, for example, that 'freedom, progress, development, individual autonomy and liberty – has historically translated into support for democracy, markets, human rights and the rule of law ... the dominance of liberalism in the humanitarian sector is linked to the possibility of engineering a peaceful and productive society.'[55] It has manifested in the promotion of international law (including international humanitarian law) by the international community (a community of states dominated by the west) to maintain international peace and security, increase attention and responses to humanitarian emergencies, and adhere to international human rights standards. However, they have also been subject to much criticism.

Cosmopolitan conceptions of IR have been variously attacked as utopian, idealistic (unrealistic) and, in some instances, irresponsible, with critiques coming from both traditional IR theorists (realist) and post-positivist (critical) theorists, including moral relativists.[56] Even within the ranks of (cosmopolitan) humanitarianism, tensions are apparent – with continuing disagreement about what exactly our ethical responsibility to the other entails in practice – emergency life-saving relief alone, or preventative action, human rights protection and long-term development.[57] These various aspects often cause problems when combined in the field, with many dissonant priorities eventuating. Perhaps the most well-known of these critiques comes from the mainstream IR theories of 'communitarianism' and 'realism', often framed as the only viable alternatives to cosmopolitanism in the real world of global politics. The chapter will now turn to the critique of cosmopolitanism provided by communitarian schools of thought, which, as noted, are regularly framed as being in direct contestation/opposition to cosmopolitanism. As the critical gender analysis to be provided later will reveal, this 'alternative' is perhaps not as disparate as it seems.

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humanitarian provider. This political/ethical space similarly impacts upon the way in which concepts such as gender are conceptualised.

[55] Barnett and Weiss, "Humanitarianism: A Brief History of the Present," 19.

[56] Elliott, "Cosmopolitan Ethics and Militaries as 'Forces for Good'," 17.

[57] Barnett, "Humanitarianism Transformed," 727.

Communitarianism

Most explicit traditional critiques of cosmopolitanism's agenda come from proponents of nationalism and communitarianism, usually represented in IR by the realist tradition. Regarding the cosmopolitan ethic as utopian and possibly harmful for international stability, these theoretical perspectives sit on the opposing side of the international ethical debate. Within them, conceptions of community are more limited, and primarily state-focused. Mainstream theorists, policymakers and practitioners opposing the cosmopolitan outlook understand state boundaries as the defining moral frontiers of the international system. Arguing that political actions are most valuable and effective within a common moral community, they suggest that as distance increases ethical appeal, political effectiveness and moral responsibility to others decreases.[58] This results in the division of the global community into states – bounded moral communities – within which leaders have a moral obligation to protect the interests of their citizens. For communitarians then, privileging a universal moral interest over that of a national community is usually unhelpful. Human beings do not acquire rights, security and justice from their membership of the community of humanity, but rather from their position as a member of a particular community – in most instances, the community of a nation-state.[59] Although communitarians do not refute the claim that communities have certain obligations to one another, they generally insist that motivations and interests will primarily be guided by immediate community attachments rather than what is best for humanity in the generic sense. In IR scholarship, including that on IHA, these communities are almost always defined according to nationality and citizenship. Michael Walzer's writing on global citizenship provides a good example of the general communitarian critique of cosmopolitanism. In his view, individuals – the universalised human individual of cosmopolitanism – can only truly develop a meaningful set of moral attachments, responsibilities and obligations within the identity of citizen, an identity that is only available *within* the nation-state. An individual (cosmopolitan) morally guided only by their status as human cannot develop such ties:

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[58] Michael Wesley, "Towards a Realist Ethics of Intervention," *Ethics and International Affairs* 19, no. 2 (2005): 57.

[59] Michael Walzer, *The Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995).

> What can the real life of such a person be like? Imagine him maximizing his utilities, and society is turned into a war of all against all, the familiar rat race, in which, as Hobbes wrote, there is 'no other goal, nor other garland, but being foremost.' Imagine him enjoying his rights, and society is reduced to the coexistence of isolated selves ... Men and women ... no longer have access to a single moral culture within which they can learn how they ought to live. There is no consensus, no public meeting-of-minds, on the nature of the good life ... we have a right to choose, but we have no criteria to govern our choices except our own wayward understanding of our wayward interests and desires. And so our choices lack the qualities of cohesion and consecutiveness ... We cannot give a proper account of ourselves. We cannot sit together and tell comprehensible stories ... [It] is fragmentation in practice; and community is the exact opposite, the home of coherence, connection and narrative capacity.[60]

Walzer further argues that it is unlikely that a meaningful form of communal attachment and identification can develop from outside of the structure of the nation-state and national citizenship. Thus, he argues that any form of cosmopolitan or global citizenship is unrealistic and improbable.[61]

IHA and IMHI[62] have traditionally been seen as non-communitarian and non-realist (or anti-realist) practices.[63] Where humanitarian action is undertaken, realist theorists argue that this is likely to be a mask for self-interested (communitarian) motivations, benefitting the community of the nation-state, rather than a pure humanitarian (cosmopolitan) imperative.[64] In the traditional humanitarian debate between politics and global ethics, communitarianism is seen to correspond with politics and cosmopolitanism with global ethics. The two approaches have

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[60] ———, "The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism," *Political Theory* 18, no. 1 (1990): 8-9.

[61] Andrew Linklater, "Globalization and the Transformation of Political Community," in *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, eds. John Baylis and Steve Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 722.

[62] I see little distinction between military intervention and non-military intervention (humanitarian aid provided without the consent of the receiving state's government) in terms of its relation to (the breach of) state sovereignty. All interventions, combatant or not, involve the exercise of power, impacting on the state of local power relations. Although some local acceptance is generally needed for humanitarian agencies to access populations in need, this may be negotiated without the approval of the state authorities and instead with opposition groups. The current situation in Syria provides a good example of this.

[63] Chris Brown, *Sovereignty, Rights and Justice: International Political Theory Today* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), 136.

[64] Ibid.

historically been presented as existing in a negative and incompatible relationship.[65] In practice, however, the two generally coexist amicably, if not harmoniously. This is particularly important for the following analysis of IHA theory. Communitarian thinkers insist that regardless of the ideas that dominate discursively in the international sphere, real actions and ethics will always be determined by self-interested national priorities. Even behaviour that seems to be altruistic or benevolent on the surface will, on closer examination, likely be in the interest of the national community. This, however, does not necessarily mean that it is contrary to cosmopolitan goals although it is commonly void of a cosmopolitan ethical basis and intent.

In the post-Cold War era particularly, states have become increasingly aware of the necessity of good state behaviour to ensure survival and legitimacy. Increasingly, state legitimacy is dependent not only on domestic political approval, but also on international acceptance of a ruling party. In this sense, adherence to normative (humanitarian) principles has been seen to protect state interests. As such, the realist framework has expanded to include a 'consideration of the justification for an action, or whether it is seen to be legitimate to all those affected by it.'[66] International legitimacy becomes an important determinant of international action. Realists are also concerned with the stability of the international system. Actions are assessed according to their capacity to maintain this stability. The principles of sovereignty, self-determination, non-intervention (usually couched as military non-intervention) and stability are primary in this tradition. These principles have traditionally been understood to comprise the minimal structural requirements needed for stable (state) coexistence in a pluralist international society. In Robert Jackson's words:

> ... in my view, the stability of international society, especially the unity of the great powers, is more important, indeed far more important than minority rights and humanitarian protection in Yugoslavia or any other country – if we have to choose between those two sets of values.[67]

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[65] Richard Shapcott, "Cosmopolitan Conversations: Justice Dialogue and the Cosmopolitan Project," *Global Society* 16, no. 3 (2002): 221.
[66] Wesley, "Towards a Realist Ethics of Intervention," 57.
[67] Cited in Bellamy, "Humanitarian Responsibilities and Interventionist Claims in International Society," 324.

In more recent times, however, theorists have suggested that intervention may sometimes assist in maintaining or resurrecting the state order in certain contexts where legitimacy is lost. Intervention, in this sense, loses its position as a non-realist concept. In short, as expressed by Wesley:

> ... actions in IR must align with ... three principles: motivation according to states' interests, justification in terms of principles of legitimate action, and validity by reference to the principles of international order ... Interventions motivated by general moral justifications or conceptual appeals to the validity of international order will either fail to occur or will succumb to halfhearted commitments (as the cases of Rwanda and Somalia showed). Interventions based on self-interested motivation alone (as some argued was the case with the 2003 invasion of Iraq), will strike resistance on the ground and incur great costs in morale, material and diplomatic capital.[68]

A False Dichotomy: the Cosmopolitan/Communitarian Debate as Self-referential

> ... the differences between these approaches are often overstated; communitarianism retains a broadly liberal agenda, so that these two positions are competing only over the scope of our moral community(ies) rather than articulating radically different views regarding the nature of moral obligations.[69]

The divide between cosmopolitan and communitarian approaches is easily blurred. The form of IHA present in the contemporary world demonstrates this powerfully. The reality of the state system is that it tends to promote a cosmopolitan outlook and policy rhetorically, while maintaining communitarian ethical tendencies and foreign policy approaches in practice. At worst, this results in an attitude of indifference being displayed towards others. At best, politics or strategic interests inspire sporadic, often ineffective action on behalf of those in need when required by the normative atmosphere of the international system. The likely reality then is that, as in most cases of IHA, cosmopolitan and communitarian ideals are operationalised in non-absolute and complementary ways. The dichotomy so often promoted by both sides of the traditional debate is, in many ways, false. Both help to maintain the state-

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[68] Wesley, "Towards a Realist Ethics of Intervention," 57.

[69] Fiona Robinson, "Globalizing Care: Ethics, Feminist Theory, and International Relations," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 22, no. 1 (1997).

driven agenda of global interactions. As David Chandler states: 'justifications for new interventionist norms as a framework for liberal [cosmopolitan] peace are as dependent on the needs of *realpolitik* as was the earlier doctrine of sovereign equality and non-intervention.'[70] The traditional balance of power framework has simply shifted.

The complementarity of these two agendas is not accidental. Indeed, a cosmopolitan outlook and a communitarian agenda can arrive at the same moral action, albeit through different reasoning.[71] The result is a theoretical framework best described as 'cosmopolitan-realism', where cosmopolitan rhetoric serves to legitimate a realist foreign policy, incorporating communitarian ethics.[72] This can be seen, for example, in the overwhelming direction of foreign aid flows from developed countries, to developing countries in their region.[73] Such prioritisation does not necessarily reflect the regions of greatest need. It does, however, allow donor states to maintain a cosmopolitan rhetoric, while ultimately acting in the national interest – aiming to maintain stability amongst neighbouring states, to benefit the donor's own economic and security situation. The cosmopolitan/communitarian debate then is self-referential. The consequence of this is that it limits discussion to this dualism and ignores the possibilities of alternative thinking about the international system. Both developed with the same positivist methodology, and have arisen from the same cultural and gendered standpoint. Setting up the two as a dichotomy prevents alternative realities from being imagined. When this dichotomy is deconstructed, new possibilities, both theoretical and practical, become possible, including those that may more helpfully address the realities of crisis settings on the ground.[74] The following gender (and culture) mapping of the theoretical traditions of cosmopolitanism and communitarianism as they relate to IHA will contribute to this deconstruction.

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[70] David Chandler, "*The Responsibility to Protect?* Imposing the 'Liberal Peace'," *International Peacekeeping* 11, no. 1 (2004): 59.

[71] See, for example, Erskine's rationalisation of duties to 'enemies' and civilian casualties in Iraq: Erskine, "Normative IR Theory," 53.

[72] Beck, "Cosmopolitan Realism: On the Distinction between Cosmopolitanism in Philosophy and the Social Sciences."

[73] Australian Government aid flows have overwhelmingly been directed to the Asia-Pacific region in the last five years. Commonwealth of Australia, Australia's International Development Assistance – Statistical Summary 2011–12, Canberra, AusAID.

[74] Daniel Warner, "The Politics of the Political/Humanitarian Divide," *International Review of the Red Cross* 833 (1999): 4.

FIR theories (and feminist ethical and political theories more broadly) provide a useful framework for challenging the boundaries of the cosmopolitan/communitarian debate. As noted in the *Introduction*, this thesis primarily uses a critical feminist theoretical framework[75] to conduct this analysis. Importantly, this framework neither unilaterally supports nor rejects all cosmopolitan or communitarian ideas. This is significant in that there are many feminist theorists that would classify themselves as either cosmopolitan[76] or communitarian feminists.[77] Critical feminist international relations (CFIR) theorists, in particular, aim to deconstruct theory and explore '... the ideational and material manifestations of gendered identities and gendered power in global politics.'[78] This chapter now turns to this task. The analysis will be divided into two parts, the first addressing the gendered dynamics of the cosmopolitan/communitarian debate, and the second exploring the embedded cultural history of these traditions. Although it is artificial to separate these analyses, it is necessary for the sake of intellectual coherence. The gendered and cultural histories of the cosmopolitan/communitarian debate are entwined and the gendered problems of IR theory informing humanitarianism are a result of the two histories combined.

Mapping Gender: Cosmopolitanism, Communitarianism, the Universal Man and the Public Collective

CFIR theorists have argued that both the subjects and objects of cosmopolitanism and communitarianism are gendered. Neither cosmopolitanism nor communitarianism reflects the security/identities/interests of all individuals. Nor do they provide discursive space for them to be expressed. The following analysis gives evidence to support these claims, looking first to reveal the gendered assumptions framing the cosmopolitan individual and his universal humanity, and second to reveal the gendered foundations of the communitarian national moral community, and the gendered assumptions around the place of individuals in relation to this community both domestically and internationally.

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[75] Unless otherwise specified, 'feminist theory/theorists' will be used in this thesis to refer to critical feminist international relations (CFIR) theory/theorists.

[76] See, for example: Niamh Reilly, "Cosmopolitan Feminism and Human Rights," *Hypatia* 22, no. 4 (Fall 2007).

[77] See, for example: Malla Pollock, "Towards a Feminist Theory of the Public Domain," *William & Mary Journal of Women and the Law* 12, no. 3 (2006).

[78] J. Ann Tickner and Laura Sjoberg, "Feminism," in *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, eds. Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, and Steve Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 199.

The opening line of Robin West's paper "Jurisprudence and Gender" begins with the simple question: 'What is a human being?'[79] This question also provides a good point of departure for this discussion and is central to a significant proportion of cosmopolitanism's (and, in a different way, communitarianism's) shortcomings. Both in the individual form of the 'cosmopolitan citizen' and the cosmopolitan imaginary's collective form of 'humanity', cosmopolitanism's conception of humanness presents problems for feminist and gender theorists.[80] Taking the Cartesian subject as its model for 'humanness' and thus humanity, cosmopolitanism relies on a subject that values scientific endeavour and is defined by rationality and autonomy – attributes historically associated with masculinity.[81] Susan Hekman has argued that relying on such a conception of humanness disempowers and often excludes alternative forms of subjectivity, most notably those associated with the feminine, focused around connectedness, community, subjectivity, relationality and care.[82] In short, feminist theorists (and others critical of cosmopolitanism's claims) have revealed the unencumbered autonomous cosmopolitan subject as incoherent and unrealistic when not considered as part of a collective of subjects that also includes oppositional traits.[83] Cosmopolitanism denies the reality and impact of context, history and community on the security/identity/interests of an individual – an important factor in considering the provision of emergency relief to those in a crisis setting. Notably, it also devalues the experience of feminine (or other gendered) subjects, focusing instead on the masculine Cartesian subject as the norm in the development of global cosmopolitan frameworks for interaction. The international human rights framework is a well-noted example of this with many feminist writers debating the merits of framing women's rights as human rights – and the dangers of doing so.[84] In essence, the cosmopolitan individual, presented as gender-neutral, is in fact the masculine norm. In IHA, such framing is dangerous, allowing assumptions of what 'humans' need in crisis settings to potentially miss a

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[79] Robin West, "Jurisprudence and Gender," *The University of Chicago Law Review* 55, no. 1 (1988): 1.
[80] See, for example: Kimberley Hutchings, *Global Ethics: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), 62-66.
[81] Susan Hekman, "The Embodiment of the Subject: Feminism and the Communitarian Critique of Liberalism," *The Journal of Politics* 54, no. 4 (November 1992): 1099.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Katerina Tsetsura, "Challenges in Framing Women's Rights as Human Rights at the Domestic Level: A Case Study of NGOs in the Post-Soviet Countries," *Public Relations Review* 39 (2013).

large portion of the actual population in needs assessments and relief provision. It is more relevant when considering relationships across geographical boundaries to consider the social positioning of both self and other, including reflection not only on gender identity, but also on class, ethnicity, culture, religion and so on. Understanding identity intersectionality is crucial.[85]

If West's original question is broadened from 'What is a human being?' to 'What is humanity?', cosmopolitan ideas suffer similar shortcomings. Important here is the oft-noted gender dualism in IR (and social sciences generally) that positions men as the subjects of IR and political life, located in the public sphere, and women as objects, located in the private sphere. Cosmopolitan ideas of 'humanity' are firmly located in the public sphere. Although increasingly women are joining this sphere, public life and its institutions remain steeped in masculinist framings.[86] Consequently, gendered distinctions are being formed at the level of the human community, similar to those historically noted in the (inter)national community (see below). If the masculine cosmopolitan subject is only present in the political, public sphere, identities outside this arena become feminine cosmopolitan objects. In essence, this means that those traditionally located in the private sphere (primarily women), must ascribe to the masculine norm to be accepted as political agents and cosmopolitan subjects. This idea that cosmopolitanism distinguishes between modes of humanness or between cosmopolitan subject/object is central to challenging the cosmopolitan claim to universality. Further discussion will be provided in the next section.

Taking the focus from the individual to the collective, communitarian values may superficially be seen to be more compatible with feminist ideas.[87] This is evident in their joint rejection of the rational cosmopolitan subject. Further, both feminists and communitarians agree that a subject's security/identity is defined in relation to their position as part of a community.

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[85] Gillian Youngs, "Cosmopolitanism and Feminism in the Age of the 'War on Terror': A Twenty-First Century Reading of Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas*," in *Cosmopolitanism in Practice*, eds. Magdalena Nowicka and Maria Rovisco (Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), 146.

[86] The UN's 'family of man' provides one good example. Jennifer Hyndman, *Managing Displacement: Refugees and the Politics of Humanitarianism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 64.

[87] Several strands of feminist theorising could easily be described as communitarian (although not communitarian-realist); for example, maternal and cultural feminism.

However, there are also marked deviations from the communitarian mainstream in some feminist theorising; for example, in its emancipatory objective and understanding of the relationship between self and other.[88] Most importantly, the conception of community (as nation) offered by communitarianism is inherently patriarchal and hierarchical. Carole Pateman argues that ideas of community as nation are thoroughly masculinist, as demonstrated, for example, by their representation as 'fraternal'.[89] Similar to the masculine subject of cosmopolitanism, the (national) community of communitarianism can most easily be understood as a cosmopolitan society on a small scale – a relationship amongst equal cosmopolitan subjects. This subjecthood again represents a (western) masculine norm, and difference (in gender and other identity markers) is not easily reconciled with this dominant identity.[90] Like the broader notion of humanity, the concept of sovereignty and communal responsibility leaves little room for identities other than that of the rational, public, masculine individual in the political sense. Attention to alternative identities – primarily those of the conflated category of 'womenandchildren'[91] – is only legitimately allowed through pre-existing discursive frameworks, which deny these alternative identities agency. Gendered identities that exist outside dominant framings are difficult to reconcile with this framework.

In addition to the gendered problems of cosmopolitanism and communitarianism thus far noted separately, together the two approaches present further problems. Leading on from the argument made above, the first problem is the limitation of the debate to the public sphere. Regardless of whether the terms of morality exist at the local (national) or global (international) level, both sides of the debate restrict discussion to the public sphere – the traditional sphere of the masculine subject. In Fiona Robinson's words, '... moral relations are between either abstract individuals in the context of the universal 'community' of humankind, or between encumbered, socially constructed individuals in the political community – usually

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[88] Rosemary Tong, *Feminine and Feminist Ethics* (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing, 1993), 182.
[89] Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988).
[90] Hekman, "The Embodiment of the Subject: Feminism and the Communitarian Critique of Liberalism," 1109.
[91] Cynthia Enloe, "'Womenandchildren': Propaganda Tools of Patriarchy," in *Mobilizing Democracy: Changing the US Role in the Middle East*, ed. Greg Bates (Monroe: Common Courage Press, 1991).

the nation-state.'[92] This has led to what Susan Hekman terms the 'sexism' of the debate by delegitimising other sources of moral value, responsibility and attachment as irrelevant in the international sphere – most notably those of family, religion, ethnicity, clan and other social groups.[93] Such value-bases and interest groups, usually thought of as being under the feminine sphere of influence, are generally considered to be less relevant to debates on global ethics. Consequently, the dichotomy that dominates debate remains focused in traditionally masculine domains of politics, power, autonomy and rights, limiting enquiry into important areas that may better allow the global community, whether holistically or as a system of states, to respond to instances of human suffering.[94] This is particularly problematic when such moral elitism is used to guide humanitarian action, given that much (though not all) suffering happens in the private sphere, in places where an ethics of care is perhaps necessary to guide a response.

The second problem relates to the theoretical embedding of humanitarian action in (cosmopolitan) discourses of universality, impartiality and justice and the tendency for motifs of victim and saviour to be produced as part of this discourse. The apparent need to justify humanitarian action in a world guided, at least partially, by communitarianism has encouraged the adaptation and utilisation of, what Hutchings has termed, the gendered fairy tales of war ethics.[95] Jean Elshtain's familiar motifs of just warrior and beautiful soul[96] are reinvented, although with differential positioning of the victim-hero-villain trinity. The boundaries around those to be saved and protected, traditionally the women and children of the saviour's nation, have expanded to include the women and children of the other, or perhaps, of the international community. By casting the victims to be saved by the cosmopolitan conscience as unthreatening and inhuman insofar as they are relevant to the public, political realm, IHA can proceed without altering prevailing norms of traditional IR. The cosmopolitan object (aid recipient) is thereby feminised, depoliticised and presented as a pure victim. As Hutchings

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[92] Robinson, *Globalizing Care: Ethics, Feminist Theory, and International Relations*, 67.
[93] Susan Hekman, "Moral Voices: Moral Selves: About Getting It Right in Moral Theory," *Human Studies* 16 (1993): 154.
[94] Robinson, *Globalizing Care: Ethics, Feminist Theory, and International Relations*, 67.
[95] Hutchings, "Gendered Humanitarianism. Reconsidering the Ethics of War," 29.
[96] Jean Elshtain, "On Beautiful Souls, Just Warriors and Feminist Consciousness," *Women's Studies International Forum* 5, no. 3/4 (1982).

notes, humanitarianism '... is rendered plausible through gendered discriminations between rescuer and victim, autonomy and vulnerability, control and chaos.'[97] Reinforcing this narrative is the distinction between the just, civilised, masculine aid worker (or traditionally, soldier) and the unjust, barbaric, hypermasculine, enemy warrior (villain). Traditionally the soldier of an enemy state, this figure (villain) is now represented by the refugee warriors, the warlords and the corrupt politicians at the locale of the humanitarian crisis. Where innocent male aid recipients are feminised and/or missing from the humanitarian narrative, focus is placed on the deviant beings of the cosmopolitan world – those who exploit citizens within their own national boundaries. By contrast, the cosmopolitan subject becomes the masculine hero, demonstrating how an honourable individual behaves. Rather than destroy the barbarians of the other, the masculine aid worker instead demonstrates strength by protecting the other's women and children. This narrative is largely unrepresentative of reality, and frequently removes agency from certain local identities in the crisis setting.

Finally, critical scholars have argued that the communitarian tradition (and to a certain degree the cosmopolitan tradition) has a tendency to gender the practice of humanitarianism (and development) itself. By traditional standards of IR and security studies, aid simply does not rate highly in the list of priorities determined by the international system.[98] In Bill McSweeney's reckoning, a widened security concept including international aid – relief or development – is framed as '... sentimental, feminine, utopian, and therefore incapable of transfer to the international arena for rigorous analysis.'[99] This gendering creates a hierarchy of importance in IR, with those activities associated with soft power, such as providing development aid, towards the bottom, and those associated with hard power, namely military action, ranking highly. This is particularly significant as mainstream IR is seen increasingly to embrace humanitarian military intervention more readily.

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[97] Hutchings, "Gendered Humanitarianism. Reconsidering the Ethics of War," 33.
[98] Gunhild Hoogensen and Kirsti Stuvøy, "Gender, Resistance and Human Security," *Security Dialogue* 37, no. 201 (2006): 210.
[99] Bill McSweeney, *Security, Identity and Interests: A Sociology of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 210.

Mapping Culture and Position: The view from somewhere as the view from nowhere[100]

> ... humanity, which for the eighteenth century, in Kantian terminology was no more than a regulative idea, has today become an inescapable fact. This new situation, in which 'humanity' has in effect assumed the role formerly ascribed to nature or history would mean in this context that the right to have rights, or the right of every individual to belong to humanity, should be guaranteed by itself.[101]

> There is no such thing as love of the human race, only the love of this person or that, in this time and not in any other ... The problem is not to defend universality, but to give these abstract individuals the chance to become real, historical individuals again, with the social relations and the power to protect themselves ... The people who have no homeland must be given one; they cannot depend on the uncertain and fitful protection of a world conscience defending them as examples of the universal abstraction Man.[102]

As argued in the previous section, cosmopolitan understandings of universal humanity and communitarian conceptions of national moral communities are gendered. They are often presented as universally relevant 'views from nowhere' that have in actuality been demonstrated to have a definite historical lineage – to be 'views from somewhere'. As Robinson argues, understandings of ethics and obligations to global others are undeniably grounded in historical, intellectual and cultural pasts[103] – in this case, as noted earlier, in the philosophical thought of the Enlightenment and in the historical practices of colonialism, in development and now in humanitarianism.[104] Notably, regardless of whether a cosmopolitan or communitarian theoretical framework guides action, the practice of engaging with others in the context of IHA distinguishes between modes of humanness. These modes may be defined by state borders, geographical location, or subject position as aid recipient (victim) or aid provider (saviour). In a practical sense, the cosmopolitan and communitarian frameworks have combined most frequently in the contemporary era to present a discourse of cosmopolitan responsibility while shadowing a communitarian basis for state policy and action. This is problematic for aid effectiveness and in some cases dangerous for both aid workers and

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[100] Thomas Nagel, *The View from Nowhere* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).
[101] Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism (1951)* (New York: Harcourt, 1976), 298-300.
[102] Michael Ignatieff, *The Needs of Strangers* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1984), 53.
[103] Robinson, *Globalizing Care: Ethics, Feminist Theory, and International Relations*, 5.
[104] Jenny Edkins, "Humanitarianism, Humanity, Human," *Journal of Human Rights* 2, no. 2 (2003): 257.

beneficiaries. The two quotes above from Hannah Arendt and Michael Ignatieff allude to these dangers and most notably to the 'view from nowhere' or from 'humanity', which is often expressed as deriving from an 'international community'. This section will discuss arguments that culture and history have informed and continue to inform and position the IR theoretical traditions guiding IHA and argue that both cosmopolitanism and communitarianism are products of, and in the majority applied by, certain cultural/national (western) communities of 'humanity'. When applied universally they are seen as often inappropriate and, as such, are problematic. This section will begin with an analysis of cosmopolitan ideals, which as noted are strongest in the discursive realm, followed by an analysis of communitarian thought.

The cosmopolitan ideals driving humanitarianism are evident throughout the world. At an abstract level at least, they could be considered universal. Scholars have noted, however, that the institutionalised form of cosmopolitan humanitarianism we have today has its roots in a particular cultural community – namely, the west.[105] Humanitarianism's history (and indeed its relationship to colonialism) thus suggests that tensions between the western and non-western world continue to exist within its dominant theory (cosmopolitanism) and practice. As noted, humanitarianism operates under a framework guided by a mixture of cosmopolitanism and communitarian ideals. At a pragmatic level, it sometimes attempts to spread the values of the (usually western) aid provider to places in which these values are weak. When states, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) and UN agencies attempt transformational politics in their efforts to relieve suffering, they work from an overtly culturally produced standpoint. This standpoint is primarily that of the western developed world, and scholars and practitioners have argued that knowledge produced and applied is infrequently informed by particular contexts.[106] As such, it is sometimes discordant with particular contexts. With funding accessibility and policy decisions resting almost entirely with (western) implementing agencies, this has generated concern that recipients of aid (usually non-western communities) often have very little power in determining their future. As Lorraine Elliott suggests, the 'universal ethic' may thus become the 'ethic of the powerful'

[105] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism*.
[106] See, for example: Lina Abirafeh, *Gender and International Aid in Afghanistan: The Politics and Effects of Intervention* (Jefferson: Mcfarland and Company, 2009), 69.

universally applied.[107] Where aid provision does not involve a transformational agenda, allegiance to the principle of impartiality often effects a similar lack of engagement with local context. Without a political agenda, deep contextual awareness is not always deemed necessary, with humanity understood as essential sameness. The importance of context, identity and history in defining one's moral community is sometimes overlooked in favour of more easily applied abstractions.[108]

Cosmopolitan ideas have come under sustained attack from both conservative and critical commentators, generating much scholarship. The idea of the universal ethical obligation to the other – the primary drawcard to the theory for many – is also its most problematic feature. As Calhoun suggests:

> On the one hand, Cosmopolitanism brings out a sense of ethical obligation that is rooted in global interconnections. On the other hand, the idea of Cosmopolitan politics also reflects a distanced view of the global system, a view from nowhere or an impossible everywhere that encourages misrecognition of the actual social locations from which distant troubles appear as emergencies.[109]

The operational effects of this can be dire, with inappropriately mandated and resourced missions being deployed to regions requiring political action (as was noted during the Rwandan genocide[110]), when nothing other than a duty to 'humanity' guides action. Perhaps more concerning, however, is that the 'view from nowhere' may allow spectators of humanitarian emergencies to distance themselves from stories of disasters, thereby failing to recognise and empathise with real people in real situations. To the public audience the famine-stricken child in Ethiopia may lose their distinction from the refugee child in Pakistan. As identity is lost, so too is any chance of enduring public attention or action. As Fiona Terry argues, a 'politics of pity' overrules public compassion, empathy or calls for justice, leaving

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[107] Elliott, "Cosmopolitan Ethics and Militaries as 'Forces for Good'," 17.
[108] Discussion of the pragmatic implications of humanitarianism will be continued in the next chapter.
[109] Calhoun, "The Imperative to Reduce Suffering: Charity, Progress and Emergencies in the Field of Humanitarian Action," 86.
[110] Samantha Power, "Bystanders to Genocide. Why the United States Let the Rwandan Tragedy Happen," *The Atlantic Monthly*, September 2001.

concerted action at a minimum.[111] Without a feeling of a shared community, and therefore shared suffering, and while the distinction between us and them is maintained, pity remains the dominant response. Cosmopolitan rhetoric may become a tool under which suffering can be conflated, with diminished specificity. This has generated concern that cosmopolitan rhetoric has become complicit in the continuation of nationalist-inspired self-protectionism in the international system, with humanitarianism deployed to placate the weak politics of pity surrounding international tragedy.

The causes and uses of this 'politics of pity' are many and problematic. Most importantly, the 'politics of pity' relies upon a distinction between what is human and what is *only* human. Reinforcing the feminised victim motifs discussed above, this distinction may draw on the subject position of the aid provider and the aid recipient. As Hutchings suggests this may mark the former as the true 'cosmopolitan-communitarian subject' – rational, autonomous and with a moral duty to aid others – and the latter as the 'cosmopolitan-communitarian object' – weak, dependent and irrational.[112] Similarly, the requirement of impartiality in promoting the cosmopolitan vision of humanitarian assistance has been suggested to necessitate an image in which the victim/recipient/object of cosmopolitanism/humanitarianism must present as little more than what Giorgio Agamben has termed 'bare life'.[113] This has been deemed necessary to fit the identity of the cosmopolitan/humanitarian object. Their suffering should be presented as unnecessary in that they do not deserve it, but also preventable in the sense that an outsider may be able to fix it. As Prem Kumar Rajaram explains, images of aid recipients' agency are generally not considered desirable by aid providers.[114] Hutchings adds that the relationship between aid provider and recipient is presented not only as a 'just warrior' (from the *modern* world) saving a 'beautiful soul' (of the *backwards* world) but also as the fully human (adult) rescuing the potential or residual human (child, elderly person, woman).[115] In this sense the recipient community is holistically emasculated and disempowered, while the

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[111] Terry, *Condemned to Repeat? The Paradox of Humanitarian Action*, 235.
[112] Hutchings, "Gendered Humanitarianism. Reconsidering the Ethics of War," 30.
[113] Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).
[114] P. K. Rajaram, "Humanitarianism and Representations of the Refugee," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 15, no. 3 (2002).
[115] Hutchings, "Gendered Humanitarianism. Reconsidering the Ethics of War," 31.

(usually western) provider community asserts its (masculine) power and superiority.[116] As Jenny Edkins expresses:

> The assumption is that 'we' and 'they' are already distinct, before there is any relationship between us. The only question to be resolved is how 'we' should help 'them' – and it is not seen as problematic to look for general, ahistorical rules that will provide solutions to these questions. The sovereign state system under which we live is one that is based on and produced by such distinctions: between domestic and foreign, inside and outside, us and them, here and there. To take for granted these distinctions is already to frame the whole debate in a way that leads inexorably towards a solution supportive of state sovereignty. This is why, far from challenging state sovereignty, humanitarianism reinforces it.[117]

Here again, we see how the cosmopolitan imperative combines with the communitarian state system to reinforce its power. The narrative of humanity as essential sameness may allow the same exclusionary practices as a more overt adherence to communitarian moral principles in IR. It may also allow the provider community to deny any role in causing the suffering of others.[118] In Liisa Malkki's words, aid recipients are depersonalised, decontextualised and dehistoricised, leaving them as politically and socially inferior to their benefactor.[119] Their lack of status can be seen easily in the discrepancies in deaths between locals and foreigners in a crisis setting, and in the attention paid to those deaths in the media.[120]

Is Feminism the Answer?

If the cosmopolitan/communitarian dualism is both negatively affected by its positionality and its implicit gendering, is a feminist ethical revisioning the way forward for IHA? Feminism is a varied and multifaceted theoretical tradition, in IR and elsewhere. Within its many variants are

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[116] There have been some attempts to challenge this within the humanitarian community in the last five to ten years, including by encouraging 'accountability to affected populations.' On the whole, however, the distinction between 'us' and 'them' is maintained.

[117] Edkins, "Humanitarianism, Humanity, Human," 255.

[118] Hyndman, *Managing Displacement: Refugees and the Politics of Humanitarianism*, 64.

[119] Liisa Malkki, "Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization," *Cultural Anthropology* 11, no. 3 (1996).

[120] Didier Fassin and Mariella Pandolfi, "Introduction: Military and Humanitarian Government in the Age of Intervention," in *Contemporary States of Emergency. The Politics of Military and Humanitarian Interventions*, eds. Didier Fassin and Mariella Pandolfi (New York: Zone Books, 2010), 10.

supporters of both a feminist cosmopolitanism and a feminist communitarianism – neither of which provides 'the answer' to the gendered theoretical problems outlined above. In fact, they can indeed exacerbate the inappropriateness of the cultural paternalism in this theoretical framework and debate. Feminists who adhere to one or other of these traditions fail to displace the gender bias and discourses of the debate. In Hekman's words:

> The debate offers women the choice of adopting the masculinist disembodied subject of liberalism or the subordinated, determined subject implicit in the Communitarian's vision of the idea of the ideal community. Synthesising the two discourses does not overcome the polarity between them nor the sexism of either.[121]

Yet, unfortunately, as the feminist theories most compatible with (and largely supportive of) the mainstream debate, they are incorporated within it most frequently and easily, to the detriment of alternative feminist models. The major policy initiatives focused on gender in IHA reflect these traditions almost exclusively.

Scholars such as Niamh Reilly and Carol Gilligan have argued for a feminist revisioning of cosmopolitanism[122] and communitarianism.[123] However, conventional feminist cosmopolitanisms and communitarianisms contain many shortcomings. Briefly, positivist feminist reinterpretations of cosmopolitan and communitarian ideals remain flawed and are unable to engage with the individual subjectivities of the humanitarian subject. Where feminist agendas are restricted by positivist framings, they, and the practices they embody, remain safe for mainstream IR and are easily incorporated within it. Fixed understandings, albeit reframed, about a universalised (woman) subject and/or her identity/interests/needs remain in such theorising with little real attention to the problems of essentialism and positionality described above. As Elizabeth Spelman argued as early as 1988 '... "essential woman" has always been defined in white middle class, heterosexual terms, terms that define other women as

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[121] Hekman, "The Embodiment of the Subject: Feminism and the Communitarian Critique of Liberalism," 1113.
[122] Reilly, "Cosmopolitan Feminism and Human Rights."
[123] Notably, this includes early articulations of 'care ethics'. See: Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*.

"different" and, often, inferior.'[124] Discussions of, for example, race, sexuality, culture and class are not possible within such framings. Similarly, conceptions of needs, identities and relations which are different to those of "essential woman" are often considered illegitimate. No substantive structural change is required within cosmopolitanism, communitarianism or the international aid architecture itself. For a positivist feminist reimagining of the debate, all that is required is the addition of female bodies.[125] Gendered identities more broadly are not easily recognised, nor is the importance of intersectionality and intersubjectivity for self-identity and, by extension, for identifying (humanitarian) needs and addressing them.

Beyond the Dichotomy: Alternative Approaches and a Critical Feminist Ethics of Care

A positivist feminist revisioning of the cosmopolitan/communitarian debate is not sufficient to overcome the problems discussed here. Instead, it is necessary to look to alternative ethical approaches that draw on but also move beyond this dichotomy. Post-positivist alternatives to this dualism provide the most promise for a more ethical theoretical engagement with the other in IHA. These alternatives will be explored throughout the thesis. However, it is helpful to briefly foreshadow the major argument to be made. In short, a critical feminist ethics of care (CFEC) provides a promising guide for addressing the shortcomings of IR theory's current engagements with IHA.

The contributions of several theoretical traditions, both positivist and post-positivist, are significant in making this argument. Most significant within these are IR's broad critical school (including CFIR theory) and care ethics, including its critical form (CFEC). These traditions are drawn upon to suggest that a globally applied CFEC will be able to guide IHA into a relational practice and theory based on attentiveness, responsiveness and responsibility to the other.[126] Post-positivist theories of IR broadly hold promise for a more ethical engagement with the other through IHA. However, a CFEC enables both a rejection of the foundationalism of traditional approaches while providing an applicable alternative for global interaction.

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[124] Elizabeth Spelman, *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988), 11.

[125] Gillian Youngs, "Feminist International Relations: A Contradiction in Terms? Or: Why Women and Gender Are Essential to Understanding the World 'We' Live In," *International Affairs* 80, no. 1 (2004): 80.

[126] Robinson, "Globalizing Care: Ethics, Feminist Theory, and International Relations," 121.

Importantly, a CFEC rejects the notion of care as a feminine or women's practice. Rather, it is imagined as a tool to reframe relations between states, institutions and individuals in the public as well as the private realm, providing a contextually adaptable guide, rather than prescribing global rules or principles for interaction. By drawing on CFIR, a CFEC acknowledges the importance of '... *multiple* bases of identity and power relations, not exclusively gender'[127] and sees them as mutually constitutive, underlying needs, responsibilities and interactions on the part of aid provider and recipient.

Critical feminism considers identity and interests to be personal, intersubjectively constituted, and contextually determined. It embraces the idea of multiple subjectivities within gendered categories, acknowledging and celebrating difference and problematising the notion of an essential 'humanity' or indeed 'womanity'. Identity and interests may, for example, be as reliant or more reliant on ethnicity, class, caste, religion or nationality as they are on gender (although gender will always comprise an aspect of identity/interests). In the aid context, both cosmopolitan and communitarian approaches are inappropriate as they rely on pre-existing categories of analysis, including 'community', 'woman' and 'humanity'. Unified interest/identity groups such as these do not exist in reality. Indeed, imagining them to limits the ability to imagine alternative social organisations that may benefit the humanitarian context. A CFEC enables the dichotomy between universalised humanity and the reality of the contextualised aid recipient to be overcome. This dichotomy is instead replaced with a dialogical relationship that seeks to link localised individual experiences to wider global processes. In this way, the theoretical divide between the aid provider and recipient can be lessened and a politics of empathetic humanitarianism encouraged.[128] The practical implementation of a CFEC will be discussed further in the chapters to come. To foreshadow, it is grounded in an appreciation of the subjectivity of experience and the importance of context, and focuses specifically on relationships of care and relationships of power that are necessary for transformation.

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[127] Jennifer Hyndman and Malathi de Alwis, "Beyond Gender: Towards a Feminist Analysis of Humanitarianism and Development in Sri Lanka," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 31, no. 3-4 (2003): 223.
[128] Helen Hudson, "'Doing' Security as Though Humans Matter: A Feminist Perspective on Gender and the Politics of Human Security," *Security Dialogue* 36, no. 2 (June 2005): 155.

Concluding Comments

This chapter has mapped significant debates within IR theory as they apply to IHA and demonstrated that, on both sides of the major debate, IHA is fundamentally gendered. The debate is also falsely dichotomous. The cosmopolitan and communitarian agendas are mutually reinforcing, both leading to the feminisation and disembodiment of the humanitarian recipient. Post-positivist theories, and specifically CFEC, have a lead role to play in deconstructing this false dichotomy in order to improve gendered insecurities when IHA is mobilised in the midst of this debate.

For IHA, of course, this debate and analysis is most important in the impact it has on policy and practice. Despite its claims to impartiality and neutrality, IHA, like all forms of international interaction, works within the greater norms and trends of the international system. As such, the theories that guide IR policy and practice generally are also of great relevance to the policy and practice of IHA. Drawing on the gender mapping of the dominant IR theories informing IHA presented here, *Chapter Two* will continue by mapping gender in IHA policy and practice, questioning how the shortcomings of theory outlined here have impaired programming and delivery and influenced the way in which gender has been 'introduced' to the realm of humanitarian aid.

Chapter Two:

Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence? Locating Gender in a Changing Humanitarian World

> Over the decades, humanitarianism has maintained a delicate, and ultimately unstable, balance between different elements ... This is not a dialectic, with a movement from antithesis to synthesis, suggesting that humanitarianism is moving toward a reconciliation and harmonization of its different parts. Nor is humanitarianism a pendulum, swinging back and forth between the excesses of purity and politics, never quite finding a resting place. Neither of these metaphors quite captures how humanitarianism is defined by an "unstable balance" between potentially contradictory elements that are always present and never reconcilable. The metaphor that comes closest is the double hologram: tilt the picture one way and some parts become prominent and others fade; tilt the other way and there is a reversal.[1]

Contradictions and paradoxes permeate the world of IHA. The evolution of the international humanitarian aid sector has been uneven, *ad hoc*, disjointed and, especially in the last 10 to 20 years, expansive. Humanitarian actors have proliferated in both number and type, as have the actions considered to be humanitarian and the circumstances needed to define a situation as a humanitarian emergency. The end of the Cold War has ushered in what Michael Barnett and Thomas Weiss have described as a simultaneous 'golden era' and 'new dark age' for IHA.[2] IHA receives more widespread governmental and private support than ever before. At the same time, the increasing complexity of emergencies leaves humanitarian organisations ill-equipped to deal with situations for which they were not originally designed to address. In response, the humanitarian industry has evolved and adapted to work within the contemporary situation. Yet, as described above, this has been a disorganised, unplanned, and at times arbitrary process. Each humanitarian provider must work to reconcile its history, organisational identity and mandate with changing contexts, new demands, and proliferating competitors. As they have sought to do so, contradictory mandates, policies and practices have arisen both within and between humanitarian organisations. The international humanitarian system remains collectively committed to a common objective – 'to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain

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[1] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism*, 8.
[2] Barnett and Weiss, "Humanitarianism: A Brief History of the Present," 3.

and protect human dignity during and in the aftermath of emergencies.'[3] However, the interpretation of this objective and the best way to achieve it remain the topics of passionate debate. The result has been the emergence of a disjointed system and the development of not one, but many humanitarianisms working under a single banner.

Gender has great significance for debates regarding the evolution of humanitarianism. Gender influences and is influenced by the international humanitarian system, as an analytical lens, and as a policy concept and programming principle in gender equality and/or awareness. Yet, at a systemic level, consideration of the relationship between gender and humanitarianism has been largely neglected. Most notably, there has been only scant discussion of the way in which the practice of humanitarianism is itself gendered[4] or the way in which gender policy and programming interacts within the greater humanitarian landscape. This is despite the status gender has achieved as a policy and programming priority in global humanitarian discourse. This chapter seeks to bring clarity to the relationship between humanitarianism and gender. First, the chapter provides an annotated and abridged history of IHA to set the background for the analysis to follow. Second, the chapter discusses three major areas in which gender is of relevance to and interacts with IHA, demonstrating the ways in which the history of the greater aid system impacts on this relationship. Discussion will focus on the foundations of gender in IHA and its origins in the development sphere, before considering its existence in the humanitarian realm. Building on the discussion of theory in the previous chapter, the current chapter will prepare for the case study chapters and argue that the role of gender in IHA is both unique and important.

A few caveats are needed regarding the discussion that follows. First, this chapter focuses on what is considered to be the international humanitarian system. As with the ideas presented in *Chapter One*, this system has a strong western bias and history. It is important to note that

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[3] This is a well-accepted definition used by leading humanitarian agencies and global humanitarian partnership initiatives, such as the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative and the Global Humanitarian Assistance Initiative. Good Humanitarian Donorship. "Principles and Good Practice of Humanitarian Donorship." http://www.goodhumanitariandonorship.org/gns/principles-good-practice-ghd/overview.aspx, 13 May 2013. Global Humanitarian Assistance. "Defining Humanitarian Aid." http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/data-guides/defining-humanitarian-aid, 13 May 2013.

[4] A notable exception is Jennifer Hyndman's work, which makes a strong contribution in this area.

other traditions of providing compassionate aid also have strong parallel histories.[5] However, as the current dominant system remains, by and large, a product of western historical practices, focus will accordingly be directed here. Second, the account of humanitarianism's history here is by no means complete. Nor is it completely applicable to all humanitarian organisations. As always, and noting the fragmentation of the system, there are exceptions and deviations from the core story. These will be discussed where appropriate, but given the scope of this chapter will not be dealt with comprehensively. Third, this chapter focuses narrowly on humanitarian aid provision and not on broader human rights, social justice, development politics or aid advocacy agendas. Although close links (of amity and enmity) often exist between the providers of humanitarian aid and advocacy-focused organisations – particularly those dealing with human rights, global equality and welfare – the latter will not be considered in this discussion in depth. The actions and objectives of these actors are, of course, often intertwined. However, it is important to maintain the somewhat arbitrary boundary between them to understand the way in which humanitarian provider organisations have developed in relation to these broader agendas. Fourth, and finally, the story to be told is in many ways a collection of narratives and counter-narratives, rather than an objective history. As the chapter progresses, it is apparent that humanitarianism has evolved according to several broad historical trends. At the same time, however, much of its story is driven and overshadowed by a moral mythology that disguises a diverse practical and ethical history. To refer to this driving moral mythology, I use the terms 'narrative' and 'mythology', to indicate that it is indeed a story that is the particular representation of events preferred by the current dominant force of humanitarianism – the (western) international community. Where I use the term 'history', in contrast, I refer to historical facts that are, in my view, unbiased by this narrative.

[5] See, for example: Amy Singer, *Charity in Islamic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Humanitarianism's history: annotated and abridged

The modern international humanitarian system finds its predecessors in two distinct forms of assistance. The first appeared in the form of organisations designed specifically to provide emergency disaster and conflict-related relief. The second encompasses instances of more enduring quasi-development faith-based missions and long-term political activism around prison conditions, women's and minority rights, child labour and the slave trade.[6] The sometimes conflicting and sometimes complementary agendas encompassed in these two historical traditions have accompanied IHA throughout its life so far, with one or the other periodically taking precedence and causing much debate. IHA's prevailing mythology lies firmly with the former, and most notably with the birth of the RCRC Movement in the mid-19th century. Recent movements to an overtly principled 'new humanitarianism' lie more comfortably with the latter. This tension has overlaid IHA's history. Yet, it is also possible to discern discrete trends and eras. These are particularly noticeable between what Michael Barnett has termed the period of neo-humanitarianism (1945–1989) and liberal humanitarianism (1989–present) and it is on these two eras that this chapter will focus.[7] To begin, the chapter will return to the Battle of Solferino in 1859. By taking this historical moment as its starting point, no claims as to the significance of this event in marking the commencement of IHA as an organised practice are being made. Indeed, as noted, events prior to this were highly significant in IHA's development. Attention is directed to this time simply to accord with the consequence it has had in IHA's narrative and debates within IHA to the contemporary era.

The Early Years: War, Rescue and Henri Dunant – The Humanitarian Fairy-tale

The most oft-cited founder of modern humanitarianism is Swiss philanthropist and businessman, Henri Dunant. The origin myth of humanitarianism proceeds as follows. Unintentionally witnessing the effects of a battle between French and Austrian forces in June 1859, Dunant organised for Italian women in the nearby town of Solferino to volunteer and assist him in providing emergency relief to wounded soldiers on the battlefield. He

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[6] Mika Aaltola, *Western Spectacle of Governance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 7-8.
[7] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism*, 30.

subsequently wrote of the experience in his *Memory of Solferino* and concluded his account with a call to action, petitioning for the establishment of a network of voluntary relief agencies to assist national authorities to provide relief during wartime:

> But why have I told of all these scenes of pain and distress, and perhaps aroused painful emotions in my readers? Why have I lingered with seeming complacency over lamentable pictures, tracing their details with what may appear desperate fidelity? It is a natural question. Perhaps I might answer it by another: Would it not be possible, in times of peace and quiet to form relief societies for the purpose of having care given to the wounded in wartime by zealous, devoted and thoroughly qualified volunteers?[8]

Shortly after, in October 1863, representatives of 16 nations attended a conference to discuss Dunant's ideas, resulting in the official formation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and for many, the founding of modern humanitarianism.[9] Within a year, the ICRC, at that time wholly comprised of Swiss nationals, began rallying for the establishment of national Red Cross societies.[10] With Genevan philanthropist, Gustave Moynier at the helm the ICRC began operation following four guiding principles:

- foresight: preparations for war should be made in peacetime
- solidarity: national Red Cross societies should be mutually supportive
- centralisation: relief should be provided by a single society per country
- mutuality: relief should be provided to any in need, notwithstanding nationality.[11]

In terms of international presence and value-setting, the ICRC became the premier humanitarian provider, and has maintained its position since.[12] As IHA developed, the power of the RCRC Movement's story increased. Modern humanitarianism's ethical tradition continues

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[8] Henri Dunant, "A Memory of Solferino." (Geneva: ICRC, 1959), http://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/publications/icrc-002-0361.pdf,

[9] Michael Barnett, *The International Humanitarian Order* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 181.

[10] This was later also expanded to Red Crescent and Red Crystal Societies.

[11] Not until 1965 were the now infamous and contested *Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement* proclaimed at the 20th International Red Cross Conference in Vienna: humanity; impartiality; neutrality; independence; voluntary service; unity; and universality. These seven principles, and particularly the first four, remain integral to the definitional debates regarding the humanitarian concept and mandate today.

[12] UN agencies and INGOs have now overtaken the movement in monetary terms. Global Humanitarian Assistance. "Workstream: Delivery." http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/workstream/workstreams/delivery, 4 June 2013.

to be based around the later established Fundamental Principles of the RCRC Movement that govern the work and bind together the national RCRC Societies, the ICRC and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). The Principles – humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality – were only officially proclaimed in 1965 at the 20th International Conference of the Red Cross in Vienna. Since this time and until recently, they have been adopted (although variously interpreted) as requisites for all legitimate humanitarian action, whether led by the Red Cross or other organisations. While the last four of these principles (independence, voluntary service, unity and universality) act primarily as functional guidelines for the internal workings of the Red Cross (and other similar organisations), the first three (humanity, impartiality and neutrality) have come to represent IHA's core, its essence and its lifeblood. Even when practically ignored, the principles and the tradition are discursively promoted in confirmation of humanitarianism's pure origins and intentions. For the ICRC, they are constitutive of humanitarianism and when respected allow 'humanitarian space' to be created and maintained. Those organisations that continue to follow a Dunantist interpretation of the ICRC principles have become known as the traditional, old or first humanitarians.[13]

The road for the ICRC from creation to its current position was, by no means, a smooth one.[14] In both World Wars, evaluations of the ICRC's work elicited mixed opinions. One historian wrote of the First World War:

> The fundamental humanitarian principles of protecting the sick and wounded, and of treating prisoners decently survived the war intact, strengthened, indeed, by so many millions of people's becoming acquainted ... with the work of ambulances and hospitals on the one hand, the predicaments of POWs [prisoners of war] and their families on the other. The ICRC and the national Red Cross societies came out of the war raised in reputation and regard.[15]

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[13] Henceforth, this thesis will use the term 'traditional humanitarianism' to refer to those practices that align with the Red Cross Red Crescent principles. This usage does not imply that this is the most legitimate type of humanitarian practice or indeed the first.

[14] For a detailed discussion, see: David Forsythe, *The Humanitarians: The International Committee of the Red Cross* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[15] Geoffrey Best, *Humanity in Warfare: The Modern History of the International Law of Armed Conflicts* (London: Methuen, 1983), 52.

World War I consolidated the ICRC's role as the actor for delivering humanitarian aid during conflict. Critics, however, viewed the ICRC less favourably after World War II. Despite unprecedented achievements and being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize of 1944, the ICRC came under attack for not reacting to the high death toll amongst Soviet prisoners and for not speaking out regarding the horrors of the Nazi death camps and associated persecutions.[16] This attribution of blame began fierce debate around the ICRC's neutrality principle that endures to the current day.

The Cold War again presented new challenges. Criticised by both the western and Soviet blocs, the ICRC's difficult post-World War II position was compounded as it received little or no cooperation from most communist governments. Only towards the end of the Cold War did the ICRC manage to begin significant operations in Soviet countries. On the other side, the ICRC persevered with its neutrality mandate against strong pushes, from the United States (US) particularly to use the organisation to forward its own agenda. Nevertheless, throughout the Cold War, the ICRC was active in many conflicts in both the developed and developing world. All played a role in shaping the development of the ICRC during this period, but one particularly highlights the continued contentiousness of the ICRC's policy on neutrality and refusal to condemn acts of war publicly – the Biafran Civil War. Two related incidents are of particular importance.

The first unfolded after the ICRC uncharacteristically declared that it would provide relief to Biafra without the permission of the Nigerian Government. Following months of unsuccessful negotiations with Lagos, the decision resulted in the Nigerian army attacking an ICRC refugee camp, killing four French Red Cross workers, and a few months later, shooting down an ICRC relief aircraft. The events damaged the perceived legitimacy of the ICRC and seemed to reinforce the requirement for the ICRC to not only claim neutrality, but to be perceived as such by both parties to the conflict. The second event would seem to support an opposite view. Disobeying orders from headquarters to evacuate the area, a group of French Red Cross

[16] Francois Bugnion, "From the End of the Second World War to the Dawn of the Third Millennium – the Activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross During the Cold War and Its Aftermath: 1945–1995," *International Review of the Red Cross* 35 (1995): 208.

doctors witnessed the massacring of unarmed and wounded men, women and children by the Nigerian army. The group, who had remained in the area only to provide medical assistance, was deeply scarred by the violence, but also by the refusal of the ICRC to speak out over the killing. Unable to reconcile what they had witnessed with the ICRC's brand of neutrality, the group left the ICRC to form *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF) – an NGO founded on the idea of *témoignage* – testimony.[17]

The events leading up to the end of the Cold War do not provide conclusive evidence for or against the validity of the ICRC's approach to neutrality. They do, instead, hint to the complexity of the debate and the drive behind alternative and contradictory approaches in the sector. Regardless of this and other challenges, however, the dominance of the ICRC in the period between 1945 and 1991 solidified it as a unique actor, with a unique mandate, and a unique role to play in an evolving international humanitarian system. Importantly, it also cemented the place of the ICRC's narrative as representative of the practice of IHA.

A Parallel System

While the ICRC suffered through the challenges of the World Wars and then the Cold War, the humanitarian enterprise saw the emergence of a sometimes complementary, sometimes contradictory broader international humanitarian system. Largely responding to the 20th century's World Wars, this, at first, comprised two major organisational types: NGOs, and what would later become the UN agencies. Although most organisations were conceived with specific causes in mind, the idea of 'humanity' united them under a single humanitarian banner. Humanity was variously defined, with aid distribution more or less being determined according to identity, in line with the mandates of individual agencies. Lutheran World Relief, founded in 1945, used the idea of 'family' to limit its focus to fellow Lutherans across borders.[18] Catholic Relief Services, with the support of the United States Government, began its work in 1943 by aiding Polish Catholics fleeing Hitler's regime. Even secular CARE International, on its formation in 1945, began as a cooperative by which Americans could send

[17] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism*, 137-45.
[18] Ibid., 112.

relief items to friends and family in Europe.[19] In this way, the early stages of a system began to form. The system began and would continue without a design or defining objectives, leaving many organisations flexible and adaptable to the situation that would present itself in the post-Cold War era. In Waler and Maxwell's words, IHA established itself 'more like an eco-system than a purpose built structure ... [with] many competing purposes and actors running up against each other.'[20]

From 1945 to the end of the Cold War, the devastation caused by the World Wars had a dramatic effect in consolidating the perceived need for IHA more broadly. The events of the Holocaust and the terrifying demonstration of nuclear capacity ending the Second World War led to a surge in humanitarian attention – promoted by a desire to prove that basic humanity still existed.[21] Significant normative humanitarian instruments came into being in the aftermath of World War II including, notably, the United Nations Charter (1945), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), and the Geneva Convention (1949) which conferred a specific mandate for the ICRC to act in the event of an armed conflict. In 1946, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) was formed to provide food, clothing and health care to European children suffering the effects of World War II and in 1953 was made a permanent part of the UN system. In 1951, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was established (succeeding the earlier United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration) and soon became a prominent player in global humanitarian affairs. Non-governmental machinery also increased, with the quick establishment of largely faith-based agencies including Lutheran World Relief, Church World Service, Caritas International and the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (later Oxfam).[22] By the 1960s, the dominant delivering agencies – UN organisations, the ICRC and most major INGOs – present on the humanitarian stage today, were already operating in some capacity.[23]

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[19] Ibid., 112-13.
[20] Walker and Maxwell, *Shaping the Humanitarian World*, 45.
[21] Barnett and Weiss, "Humanitarianism: A Brief History of the Present," 23.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Walker and Maxwell, *Shaping the Humanitarian World*, 45. A notable exception to this is MSF, founded in 1971 by a small group of French doctors and journalists, led by Dr Bernard Kouchner. Kouchner publicly condemned the ICRC's failure to stand up to the Nigerian Government during the Nigerian Civil War in the late 1960s. MSF was founded with a primary commitment to the humanitarian

The period from 1968 to the late 1980s saw key humanitarian organisations develop further, none so much as the NGOs. Struggling through the major humanitarian crises of the period – the Vietnam War, the Biafra War, the rule of the Khmer Rouge and the African famines in the 1970s and mid-1980s – the NGOs traversed the troubled waters with limited UN support.[24] By the time the Cold War ended, the NGO sector had secured its position as a legitimate aid provider to rival the ICRC.

From Cold War Proxies to Humanitarian Crises: Contextualising the Push for a New Humanitarianism

The humanitarian world underwent vast changes after the Cold War ended. A new humanitarian reality emerged, displaying a change in both the physical landscape of humanitarian crises and in the ideas of sovereignty and security framing this landscape. As the Soviet Union collapsed and the Cold War superpowers withdrew from their proxy wars, international attention refocused from the great state-to-state rivalries of old to the crises that the superpower rivalry left in its wake: a series of domestic and regional conflicts, civil wars, mass forced migrations, militias, refugee warriors, state failure, disease, famine, economic insecurity, environmental catastrophe and general insecurity. Sometimes called 'new wars',[25] or complex humanitarian emergencies, these crises no longer play out at the frontlines of developed nations.[26] Instead, they find their homes in the domestic and regional relations of Africa, Central and South Asia, Central and South America, the Caribbean and the Pacific – in the heart of the developing world. The geographical concentration of the wars left affected countries with negligible military strategic interest for the great power(s). Belligerents frequently represent non-state entities, with little distinction made between combatants and non-combatants resulting in an augmented proportion of civilian casualties from both direct

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imperative and understanding that this commitment may sometimes interfere with an ability to remain neutral.

[24] In 1967, for example, when Biafra seceded from Nigeria, the UN did not intervene politically or provide humanitarian support.

[25] The extent to which the dynamics of these wars are in fact 'new' is a matter of some debate. Kaldor, *New & Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*.

[26] An important exception to this was the Bosnian War of the early 1990s.

targeting and as collateral damage.[27] In short, the rules and frameworks for dealing with traditional war and disaster became increasingly irrelevant. Non-state entities had no obligations under humanitarian law and were often unresponsive to its demands.[28]

This new post-Cold War landscape encouraged two major changes in popular western understandings of international security and sovereignty. The first was a more serious consideration of the human being as a referent object for security – an idea made popular on the global stage through the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) 1994 Human Development Report.[29] The second was the reframing of sovereignty as responsibility, a move that resulted in the release of the 2001 Responsibility to Protect doctrine.[30] In 1992, then UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali argued that:

> ... it is undeniable that the centuries-old doctrine of absolute and exclusive sovereignty no longer stands ... A major intellectual requirement of our time is to rethink the question of sovereignty ... to recognize that it may take more than one form and perform more than one function. This perception could help solve problems both within and among states. And underlying the rights of the individual and the rights of peoples is a dimension of universal sovereignty that resides in all humanity and provides all peoples with legitimate involvement in issues affecting the world as a whole.[31]

The traditional IR principle of non-intervention has become a privilege, dependent on a state's ability to uphold the rule of law, abide by democratic principles and maintain basic human rights for those living within its own territory.[32] The state's obligations have expanded to include a responsibility to uphold these ideals internationally where an external state is unable or unwilling to do so. The international community promoted a norm of intervention, providing it was justified in humanitarian terms, and encouraged state and quasi-state actors to become more involved in the 'humanitarian cause.'[33] In 1999, Boutros Boutros-Ghali's

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[27] Mills, "Neo-Humanitarianism: The Role of International Humanitarian Norms and Organizations in Contemporary Conflict," 164.

[28] Thomas Weiss, "The Fog of Humanitarianism: Collective Action Problems and Learning-Challenged Organizations," *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 1, no. 1 (2007): 50.

[29] United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 1994* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[30] International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, *The Responsibility to Protect* (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 2001).

[31] Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "Empowering the United Nations," *Foreign Affairs* 71, no. 5 (1992): 99.

successor, Kofi Annan, articulated the appearance of two sovereignties to be protected in the international system: individual sovereignty – that is, 'the fundamental freedom of the individual', and a redefined state sovereignty.[34]

These changes have had important implications for traditional understandings of humanitarianism's purpose, demonstrated in the United Kingdom (UK) Government's Select Committee on International Development Sixth Report.[35] In this document, the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) outlined a new path for the post-Cold War humanitarian era – one that seemed to undermine the traditions of its humanitarian forebearers. DFID proposed that the new international humanitarian system should recognise the politics of aid, place human rights on an equivalent platform to human needs in humanitarian programming, be more accountable and aware of the possible negative consequences of humanitarian action, and address both the causes and symptoms of emergency. In addition, DFID suggested that humanitarian aid needed to become more coherent and that humanitarian providers should consider alignment with donor objectives when determining the location and type of aid delivery. Neutrality – one of the defining principles of the humanitarian narrative – was questioned particularly, with DFID arguing that:

> The dilemma facing all donors is how to reconcile the principle of neutrality with the acknowledgment that humanitarian assistance always changes the nature of a conflict, becoming a further factor in the webs of cause and effect, of strategy and counter-strategy.[36]

There has been limited consensus on whether these adaptations are the right path forward for humanitarianism, and most providers have clung to the ICRC principles in discourse if not in practice. Regardless, it is undeniable that the international humanitarian system has expanded

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[32] Barnett, "Humanitarianism Transformed," 727.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Kofi Annan, "Two Concepts of Sovereignty," *The Economist*, 18 September 1999.
[35] DFID. "Select Committee on International Development Sixth Report 1999. Conflict Prevention and Post-Conflict Reconstruction. Humanitarian Assistance." http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199899/cmselect/cmintdev/55/5511.htm, 12 September 2013.
[36] Ibid.

in many areas, including its mandate and priorities, actors and capacity. For many observers and actors both inside and outside the traditional humanitarian architecture, the advent of complex emergencies necessitated a complex and expanded system-wide response from the international community. Emergencies in three countries – Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia – were instrumental in driving this agenda.

Sadako Ogata's oft-quoted phrase, 'there are no humanitarian solutions to humanitarian problems',[37] provides a good starting point for examining the cries of despair and lessons that followed these three major humanitarian operations in the early 1990s. Speaking from her experience as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees from 1991 to 2001 Ogata points to the contested argument that humanitarian problems can no longer be treated with the humanitarian tools of old – that is, a pure relief and assistance agenda. Rather, human rights protection, military intervention and post-conflict reconstruction must now be included in the humanitarian arsenal if it is to be effective. The experiences of Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia help us to understand how this argument came into being. Earlier manifestations of this sentiment were certainly present around humanitarian/human rights issues such as slavery. However, this represented a significant deviation from the prevailing discourse of humanitarianism at the time.

Somalia

A markedly different discourse surrounded the humanitarian experience in Somalia in the early 1990s than in subsequent crises. Rather than suffering the consequences of failing to act, as would later be the case in Rwanda and Bosnia, international action was taken in Somalia. Like in Rwanda and Bosnia, however, it lasted too long and was 'too much, too late'.[38] Faced with state collapse, clan war and famine, the Somali humanitarian mission began by focusing on food assistance, but soon became clouded by poor coordination, conflicting objectives and US-led military objectives. When the US and UN forces attacked the enclave of Somali clan leader

[37] Sadako Ogata, *The Turbulent Decade: Confronting the Refugee Crises of the 1990s* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005), 25.
[38] Ken Booth, "New Wars for Old," *Civil Wars* 4, no. 2 (2001): 169.

Mohamed Aideed, and the UN peacekeeping mission was given a Chapter VII mandate,[39] all hope of 'humanitarian' success was lost. As the mission progressed, Somali opinion turned against US and UN forces and by association all outside agencies, with their approach likened to a 'domineering colonial mentality'.[40] Western public opinion of the mission turned sharply against the Somali people when US forces suffered 18 fatalities and many more were wounded in a second attempted capture of Aideed. US troops withdrew within six months, with US President Bill Clinton attributing unfounded responsibility for the disaster to the UN.

The obvious lesson from this experience was that the use of humanitarianism to cover politico-military objectives is not only unlikely to be successful, but is likely dangerous. Military offensives targeting Aideed limited humanitarian space and destroyed the chances of an effective delivery of aid for humanitarian assistance agencies working parallel to military offensives.[41] Future military exercises branded as humanitarian demonstrate that this lesson was not learned.[42] The experience did, however, have a significant impact on IHA in the coming years and discouraged western (and particularly American) readiness to participate in or support any humanitarian purpose. This had calamitous consequences in Rwanda.

Rwanda

The Rwandan crisis of 1994 and its aftermath saw the humanitarian industry suffer its most severe trauma to date. First, the international community was faced with the painful fact that their own indifference before and during the tragic genocide allowed up to one million people to be slaughtered without active condemnation.[43] With the Somali experience still fresh in collective (western) memory, the ghost of Somalia, much like the ghost of Vietnam, prevented

[39] A Chapter VII mandate allows a peacekeeping mission to take military and non-military action to restore international peace and security.
[40] W. R. Smyser, *The Humanitarian Conscience. Caring for Others in the Age of Terror* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 183.
[41] Ibid., 186.
[42] The US war in Iraq provides a good example. Ibid.
[43] This figure is the subject of some debate, with the estimated number of victims ranging from 800,000 to more than one million. See: Linda Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder: The Rwandan Genocide* (London: Verso Books, 2004), 252.

action, with policymakers fearful of being caught in another 'African quagmire'.[44] As comprehension of the cost of their inaction grew in the international community, so too did feelings of guilt, resulting in an eventual influx of aid, but too late to make an impact in preventing the genocide itself.[45] Second, as funds poured in to finance the Rwandan refugee camps in Tanzania and Zaire, humanitarian workers soon discovered that aid could act to intensify the insecurity of its intended beneficiaries and even cause further harm.[46] When soon after the genocide it became apparent that humanitarian aid provided to service victims of the crisis was being diverted and manipulated to promote the survival of the former Rwandan government army and thereby sustain former *génocidaires*, the humanitarian community reached a point of despair.[47] In 1995, as a result, the French wing of MSF made the controversial decision to withdraw support for the camps.[48] While few other agencies followed this example, this episode nonetheless began an ongoing debate regarding the power of humanitarian aid, its purpose and the question of whether the good intentions of the humanitarian imperative alone were any longer sufficient in guiding action.

The Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda subsequently found that '[h]umanitarian action cannot substitute for political action.'[49] This has led to a widespread call for and implementation of a more politicised humanitarianism, rather than the humanisation of politics, which was more likely the intention of the evaluation team.[50] Further, the report pointed to the dangers of aid fuelling war economies and of creating dependency among refugee populations. Most striking, however, has been the onset of a variant of consequentialist ethics, promulgated most persuasively in Mary Anderson's 'Do No Harm' thesis, based on the Hippocratic Oath and, in some interpretations, giving states ethical

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[44] Keith B. Richburg, "Somali Memory Lingers as GIs Head for Rwanda," *The Washington Post*, 31 July 1994.

[45] Johan Pottier, *Re-Imagining Rwanda: Conflict, Survival and Disinformation in the Late Twentieth Century*, vol. 2002 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 47.

[46] For a detailed analysis of the dilemmas facing humanitarian workers in this and other circumstances, see: Terry, *Condemned to Repeat? The Paradox of Humanitarian Action*.

[47] Pottier, *Re-Imagining Rwanda: Conflict, Survival and Disinformation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 39.

[48] Terry, *Condemned to Repeat? The Paradox of Humanitarian Action*, 4.

[49] John Eriksson, *The International Response to Conflict and Genocide: Lessons from the Rwanda Experience. Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda* (1996), 46.

[50] Nicholas Stockton, "The Changing Nature of Humanitarian Crisis," in *The Humanitarian Decade: Challenges for Humanitarian Assistance in the Last Decade and into the Future. Volume 2*, ed. UNOCHA (New York: UNOCHA, 2004), 31.

support for inaction in strategically unbeneficial political situations.[51] In this sense, Rwanda demonstrates a paradox of the humanitarian industry that continues today. On the one hand, the international community is condemned when it does not act; on the other, it is considered increasingly legitimate to refrain from acting.

Bosnia-Herzegovina

Meanwhile in the western world, the intense ethnic conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina from 1992 to 1995 received much greater international attention than events in Africa.[52] Then UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali himself noted that:

> Lives lost in one place seem to matter more than lives lost in another. War in one country may get enormous attention, while war elsewhere may be virtually ignored. Violations of the rights of one people arouse far more concern than violations of the rights of another.[53]

Directly to the citizens of Sarajevo, Boutros-Ghali further stated that '[y]ou have a situation which is better than ten other places all over the world. I can give you a list of ten places where you have more problems than in Sarajevo.'[54] Boutros-Ghali's remark frames the response to the disaster well, particularly from the UN and its member states. The humanitarian operation in Bosnia-Herzegovina had many shortcomings, not least of which was the international community's lack of consensus about the appropriate course of action to take. UNHCR was tasked with duties beyond its expertise – working in open conflict as much with local war affected populations as with displaced persons. The decision to give UNHCR the authority to work outside its usual mandate primarily worked to mask political indecision and alleviate pressure in the international community for a military intervention.[55] As in Rwanda, thousands of civilians had already perished when decisive political action was taken with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) Operation Deliberate Force in August 1995.

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[51] Ibid., 32.
[52] Anne Chaon, "Who Failed in Rwanda, Journalists or the Media?," in *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide*, ed. Allan Thompson (London: Pluto Press, 2007), 162.
[53] Cited in Fouad Ajami, "The Mark of Bosnia: Boutros-Ghali's Reign of Indifference," *Foreign Affairs* 75, no. 3 (1996): 163.
[54] Cited in ibid., 163-4.
[55] Barnett and Weiss, "Humanitarianism: A Brief History of the Present," 25.

Humanitarian agencies had lost valuable time and resources, their missions plagued by refused access to endangered populations, poor security and lack of cooperation from warring parties.

The experience in Bosnia reinforced the major lesson of Rwanda and Somalia – that humanitarian relief was not an appropriate substitute for politico-military action. Indeed, attempts at neutrality in situations of conflict tended to reinforce the advantage of the strong. Humanitarian aid workers encountered this dilemma firsthand when Bosnian Muslims vocalised their despair, yelling 'we have no need of you, we need arms to defend ourselves, your food aid and medicines only allow us to die in good health.'[56]

The failure of major humanitarian responses in the 1990s most likely comes from an attempt to badge politico-military actions as humanitarian, or to use humanitarianism as a tool for delaying political action. Ambiguity in purpose and mandate resulted in a mistrust of all those claiming to be humanitarian actors. The experiences of Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia have been interpreted by many to necessitate a change in humanitarian action; one that openly combines humanitarian and political (although not military) aspirations. As such, humanitarianism today comprises a discursive struggle between traditional and new humanitarian ideals. This struggle is accompanied by unprecedented increases in humanitarian actors and mandates, funding and resources, and in public awareness and media coverage of humanitarian issues. The term humanitarian is used to describe a plethora of activities, from human rights work, food aid, and medical assistance, to economic development, democracy promotion, peacebuilding and governance. With humanitarianism as the overarching concept in a strengthened linkage between relief, rights and development, more and more international actors are drawn to the broadened humanitarian cause. In the words of Michael Barnett and Thomas Weiss: 'Because failed states are a threat to themselves and others, they must be 'saved' and the surest antidote to domestic instability is the injection of human rights, markets and democracy.'[57]

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[56] Cited in Terry, *Condemned to Repeat? The Paradox of Humanitarian Action*, 22.
[57] Barnett and Weiss, "Humanitarianism: A Brief History of the Present," 25.

These objectives would not fit in with dominant understandings of traditional humanitarianism.

Increases in state involvement particularly mark a change in direction from traditional humanitarian endeavours. Official state assistance grew from USD 2.1 billion in 1990 to USD 5.8 billion in 2000 – as a percentage of total overseas development assistance from approximately 5.8% to 10.5%.[58] Even more significant is the growing number of government foreign aid departments that now incorporate a humanitarian response unit. States are no longer donors alone but also implementing agencies. As such, donors have more control over the direction and priorities of humanitarian funding – with geographic and thematic areas of strategic interest and common cultural identification with the donor given precedence.[59] Donors now demand tangible results from their inputs, providing money in short funding cycles and subject to the fulfilment of contract requirements. Conversely, NGOs and UN agencies have less negotiating power. The explosion in humanitarian actors has made competition for funding fierce, limiting NGO, UN, and RCRC Movement bargaining ability. Refusal to participate in certain operations based on ethical principles has become more difficult as power over the industry is concentrated in state hands.

State control of humanitarian financing has strengthened further since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The ensuing 'War on Terror' provided a new political and security framework that has dominated the operating and ethical parameters of global humanitarianism.[60] In short, the post-September 11 era revolves around a security agenda based on fear, protection and non-traditional threats, uncomfortably balanced with (or concealed by) a confused politics of humanism. The result has been a further blurring of the

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[58] Barnett, "Humanitarianism Transformed," 727.

[59] According to a Humanitarian Policy Group Review, between 1996 and 1999 the top five humanitarian aid recipients (Bosnia, Serbia and Montenegro, the former Yugoslavia, Israel and Iraq) received double the funding of the next five (Rwanda, Sudan, Afghanistan, Angola and Indonesia). Note that the first five countries were located either in Europe and/or had distinct cultural or strategic interests for western donor states. Joanna Macrae, "Analysis and Synthesis," in *The New Humanitarianisms: A Review of Trends in Global Humanitarian Action*, ed. Joanna Macrae (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2002), 14.

[60] Ian Smillie and Larry Minear, *The Charity of Nations: Humanitarian Action in a Calculating World* (Bloomfield: Kumarian Press, 2004), 10.

distinction between military and humanitarian endeavours, between political and non-political decisions and between security and relief agendas. UN authority is consistently challenged by major global powers, both regarding its ability to act as a moral compass and in its position as key distributor of humanitarian relief for the state-based international community. Colin Powell famously declared of the situation in Afghanistan, 'just as surely as our diplomats and military, American NGOs are out there serving and sacrificing on the frontlines of freedom. NGOs are such a force multiplier for us, such an important part of our combat team.'[61] In the post-September 11 era, interactions between humanitarian actors, recipients, theories, mandates, roles, emotions and opinions are ever-changing, complex, confused and contradictory.

This, in short, is a standard account of humanitarianism and its evolution. Differences between old and new humanitarianism are emphasised and the uniqueness of the present period accentuated. The novelty of the form of humanitarianism in the post-Cold War is, however, over-exaggerated. Certainly, the system has expanded in scale – operational capacity, financial value and organisational diversity have all increased, and some of the crises facing the international humanitarian system are more multifaceted than they once were.[62] Many of the dilemmas faced are, however, longstanding[63] and in most cases have strong precedents.[64]

The Discursive Significance of New Humanitarianism

> Humanitarian organisations are nostalgic for a time that never existed, manufacturing their own version of Eric Hobsbawm's aphorism of nationalism – getting its history wrong. The more I study the history of humanitarianism the less convinced I am that there is much new, and if it is new it is because the aid sector has a mild form of Alzheimer's Disease,

[61] Colin Powell, "Remarks to the National Foreign Policy Conference for Leaders of Nongovernmental Organizations," 26 October 2001.
[62] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism*, 3.
[63] There are, of course, exceptions to this rule. New counter-terrorism legislation, for example, has been introduced by several donor states, since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. This imposes additional conditionalities, and restrains impartiality in aid delivery. Sara Pantuliano and Victoria Metcalfe, "Neutrality Undermined: The Impact of Counter-Terrorism Legislation on Humanitarian Action in Somalia," *Humanitarian Exchange Magazine* 53 (March 2012).
[64] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism*, 5.

failing to recognise familiar faces and constantly believing that the conversations and concerns that they have today are appearing for the first time.[65]

In his recent publications, Michael Barnett argues that the international humanitarian system is collectively forgetting or ignoring portions of its own history.[66] His reasoning is sound. Pointing to well-established patterns of organisations working for pure relief and deeper societal transformation in tandem, as well as a long history of state and private involvement in humanitarian practice, Barnett argues that humanitarian agencies have always been imbued with politics. Importantly, he notes that the traditional principles of independence, neutrality and impartiality were not part of the foundations of IHA, but were added to the ICRC's code of conduct in the mid-1960s. Indeed, Dunant's tale itself occurred in a period long after the work of the first humanitarians – work which encompassed far more than emergency relief. On deeper examination, *discursive* change as much as *practical* change has created perceptions of a 'humanitarian transformation'[67] in the international community. Yet these changes have not changed humanitarianism fundamentally, nor robbed it of its alleged historical purity – a purity that likely never existed.

Regardless of whether one accepts Barnett's arguments, the discursive primacy of the perceived disjuncture between past and present holds great significance for the international community's understanding and construction of humanitarianism today. Most significantly, the perceived novelty of the current era has elicited growing international support for an openly politicised, securitised humanitarian agenda from certain segments of the humanitarian community. Organisations that also work in the development space, such as Oxfam, Save the Children and World Vision, see the potentials of a politically conscious aid for longer term solutions, human rights protection, conflict resolution and addressing root causes of humanitarian crisis. In reaction to this new agenda, organisations that self-identify as traditional humanitarians – led by the ICRC – have reinforced the importance of aligning

[65] ———, "When Was This Age of Terror?," in *Humanitarianism and Civil-Military Relations in a Post 9/11 World*, eds. Jacinta O'Hagan and Katherine Morton (Canberra: Department of International Relations, RSPAS, ANU, 2009), 7-8.
[66] ———, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism*, 5.
[67] ———, "Humanitarianism Transformed."

humanitarian work with the principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence, as traditionally interpreted, accentuating and in some cases creating an artificial divide between the two agendas. Advocates from both sides emphasise the detriment of one approach over the other, leaving an IHA that appears divided, confused and contradictory, to the detriment of institutional learning and effectiveness. In reality, humanitarian organisations may actually embrace a combination of approaches and discourses (for example, the language of neutrality combined with politically transformative goals) and often work together with organisations of different perspectives and mandates in the field.[68] However, dichotomous language, and most importantly the (un)desirability of dividing humanitarianism and politics, defines contemporary debate in several areas.[69]

Humanitarianism Today: Dichotomies, Disputes and Deliberations

The 1990s shattered faith in the system, destroying humanitarianism's self-confidence and many observers' previously unquestioned faith in its moral authority. Humanitarianism has lost its 'untouchable'[70] aura, with critical analysis now entering the field from diverse theoretical, ideological, operational, policy and political perspectives. Outlining these debates is vital to understanding how gender issues are addressed within IHA and revolves around two central themes: the legitimate purpose and principles to guide IHA, and the legitimate actors of IHA. These debates are mentioned above but require further elaboration before moving on.

Purpose

Debates around IHA's legitimate purpose and form are significant in almost all considerations in humanitarianism's academic and policy worlds. Accounts of traditional IHA present it as taking a minimalist approach, with limited objectives and short-term goals. Following the principles of the ICRC mentioned above, particular emphasis is placed on the universality of the humanitarian imperative and on the necessity of impartial and neutral responses to

[68] This is particularly the case since the introduction the humanitarian cluster approach in 2006.
[69] See, for example: Warner, "The Politics of the Political/Humanitarian Divide."
[70] Didier Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 244.

disaster. Traditional IHA therefore seeks modest outcomes and promotes restrictive mandates as the most promising and achievable for disaster-affected populations. Immediate relief is distributed on a needs basis, with human rights considerations, political strategy and long-term development taking a necessary back seat – so as not to confuse, contradict or diminish attention to the primary mandate. As Raimo Väyrynen outlines:

> Traditional humanitarianism stresses the primacy of meeting the material needs of the victims first, by providing them with food, shelter, and medicine ... Traditional humanitarianism relies heavily on the principle of impartiality; short term human needs of each and every victim is decisive in guiding the distribution of relief.[71]

Critics from diverse standpoints have taken moral issue with such a limited humanitarian objective. Aside from the likely inability to achieve such a mandate while ensuring neutrality, impartiality and independence, theorists have argued that such limited objectives are inappropriate where humanity is unable to rely on the state system to provide longer term (non-emergency) security and quality of life for its citizens.[72] A reconsideration of IHA's purpose and a reformulation of IHA's practice have ensued, with understandings of humanitarianism's ultimate purpose and objectives proliferating. Discontented with the tradition's lack of potential to impact long-term suffering, address the root causes of disasters, or foster political or social change for the better, alternative approaches have begun to dominate humanitarian assistance, at least in the field. Discourse, however, continues to hover closely around traditional approaches.

The differences between old and new approaches mainly coincide with the (largely artificial) divide between those mandates that are mostly restorative and those that are transformative. That is, should IHA seek only to return circumstances to those prior to the disaster, providing a

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[71] Raimo Väyrynen, "More Questions Than Answers: Dilemma of Humanitarian Action," *Peace & Change* 24, no. 2 (1999): 177.

[72] Michael Barnett and Jack Snyder, "The Grand Strategies of Humanitarianism," in *Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics*, eds. Michael Barnett and Thomas G.Weiss (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 144.

so-called 'bed for the night',[73] or should it attempt to 'build back better'[74] and/or entice political or social change for long-term solutions to disaster? Intrinsic in this dichotomisation of overarching humanitarian objectives and outlooks is a series of sub-dichotomies, contentious and problematic for field cooperation and coordination. These include divisive opinions about whether objectives should be modest or ambitious, immediate or long term, or delivered as a rapid response or with a more consultative methodology.[75] The majority of humanitarian actors now contend that international responsibility does not disappear with the termination of immediate relief needs, and indeed that the international community would be morally remiss if it were to stop at emergency relief alone.[76] As Fiona Fox notes: 'It is easy to see traditional humanitarian aid as a vicious circle in which agencies continue to apply sticking plasters without healing the wound.'[77] Structural conditions are considered to be fundamentally responsible for disasters and thus prevention/reconstruction/development via positive structural change should be one of humanitarianism's key objectives, if not its primary purpose. Transformative approaches take many (sometimes inharmonious) forms and thus have proponents with various standpoints. Broadly speaking, advocates of transformation focus on several main objectives, privileging one or another as determined by individual outlook and/or context. These include protection and fulfilment of human rights (including sub-categories such as women's, children's and disabled persons' rights); conflict resolution (peacebuilding); post-conflict reconstruction and development (including governance and democracy promotion); and disaster prevention. Accompanying each is an independent outlook, mandate and delivery style leading to clashes of purpose and priorities as organisations interact in the greater international humanitarian system or operate through an integrated approach with local governments.[78]

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[73] David Rieff infamously advocates for this approach – see: David Rieff, *A Bed for the Night: Humanitarianism in Crisis* (Vintage, 2002).

[74] For example: Jim Kennedy et al., "The Meaning of 'Build Back Better': Evidence from Post-Tsunami Aceh and Sri Lanka," *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management* 16, no. 1 (2008).

[75] Barnett and Snyder, for example, place approaches into four categories: bed for the night, back a decent winner, do no harm and peacebuilding. See: Barnett and Snyder, "The Grand Strategies of Humanitarianism," 146.

[76] Ibid., 150-1.

[77] Fox, "New Humanitarianism: Does It Provide a Moral Banner for the 21st Century?," 284.

[78] Peter Fuchs, "Emergency Coordination – a Problem of Humanitarian Agencies or Rather of Politicians and Generals " *International Review of the Red Cross* 304 (1995).

In addition to coordination problems, most transformative approaches play an integral role in programs of international liberal democratic reform. They therefore become unconvincing in their arguments for ideals of impartiality or neutrality whatever their ultimate purpose.[79] Consequently, for most traditionalists, any such approach is incongruent with Dunant's formative vision and leaves humanitarianism open to criticisms of preferential treatment, political motivations, or simply, and perhaps most importantly, encouraging unrealistic expectations about unattainable goals among recipients, aid workers, donors and the general public.[80]

Transformative relief often results in the elevation of rights over needs and the strengthening of processes above saving lives. Such long-term vision allows outside agencies to attribute differential value to individual lives – in short, to determine those who may live and those who will die. The neutrality principle is weakened further with a human rights focus as it encourages a view that in some contexts, it may be appropriate to suspend aid in the short term for the longer term good. The Rwandan refugee camps in Zaire provide the most oft-cited example of this, where some agencies withdrew aid, for fear that it may be prolonging the conflict. As such, many civilians living amongst ex-combatants in the camps were sacrificed in the name of long-term peace.[81]

In addition, framing needs in terms of universalised human rights leaves recipient communities powerless to determine their own specific requirements from humanitarian relief. Indeed, it allows outside agencies to make these decisions for them. As Fiona Fox suggests, focus on rights, long-term development or peace, in preference to immediate impartial relief, subjects the right to humanitarianism to conditions, downplaying the emphasis on the universality of the humanitarian imperative. These conditions leave recipients guilty until proven innocent (or chosen for cooperation) or at least undeserving until proven worthy.[82] With neo-colonial undertones, others argue that long-term provision of aid can lead to aid dependency. This is

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[79] Humanitarian aid provided to assist women in Afghanistan provides a good example of this. See: Abirafeh, *Gender and International Aid in Afghanistan: The Politics and Effects of Intervention*.
[80] Barnett, "Humanitarianism Transformed," 725.
[81] Fox, "New Humanitarianism: Does It Provide a Moral Banner for the 21st Century?," 286.
[82] Ibid., 280.

especially the case where aid takes a transformative approach and is perceived to be replicating a western image of society.[83]

Ethics, Principles and Politics

The ethics and principles that drive IHA are no longer undisputed, with strong arguments both for and against traditional and new approaches. For some, traditional principles are paramount in ensuring that humanitarianism remains in the service of the good, and is not co-opted as a self-interested policy tool of powerful states. For others, the traditional ethical framework is outdated and potentially harmful. For these thinkers, humanitarianism requires rethinking and reframing, with alternatives such as the 'do no harm'[84] approach (amongst others) now being advocated. This debate represents one of the most fundamental paradoxes of IHA and not one that will likely ever be resolved in favour of a complete abandonment of either approach. It is likely that humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence will continue to dominate the humanitarian discourse and provide an important basis for ethical discussions of humanitarianism, if not a framework for action, even as new approaches become more dominant.

The debate between traditional and new approaches to IHA can be summarised as a shift from deontological (duty-based) ethics to focus instead on (or in parallel with) a consequentialist ethical framework. In short, humanitarian aid can no longer be deemed necessary or worthy simply because of its intrinsic qualities of 'goodness'. It must now also be assessed on its ability to effect change and achieve pre-negotiated outcomes. Essentially, it must be judged prior to deployment on its likelihood of success and evaluated retrospectively on its positive and negative consequences. Such an approach has historically been considered inappropriate – the thought that humanitarian action should or could be judged, analysed or evaluated like any other industry was viewed as contradicting the very core of the humanitarian imperative.

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[83] Schweizer, "Moral Dilemmas for Humanitarianism in the Era of "Humanitarian" Military Interventions," 559.

[84] See: Mary Anderson, *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace – or War* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1999).

Usually derived from Kantian claims, deontological ethics identify the obligation to protect humanity as an end in itself. In this sense, the moral value of the act of humanitarianism is defined by the performance of the act in its pure form. This deontological framework provides overarching support for the ICRC's traditional principles, arguing that providing each principle is adhered to, humanitarian action is ethically sound and should proceed.[85] However, through the humanitarian crises of the 1990s, it became increasingly apparent that IHA was able to produce both positive and negative consequences for recipient populations. Consequently, aid workers and donor governments have progressively overlaid traditional deontological humanitarian ethics with a results focus, aimed at creating the best possible outcome in a crisis setting. An increased recognition of the possible negative side-effects of IHA has resulted in an augmented focus on both *ex-ante* and *ex-post* situational analyses and evaluations of humanitarian missions.[86] In turn, this has emphasised the focus on aid effectiveness and accountability, and led to a general shift to a more pragmatic, less ideological humanitarianism. Not only must aid now 'do no harm', it must also represent 'value for money'.[87] Consequentialists argue that with finite resources available, the distribution of aid funding must be carefully considered and provided according to potential impact rather than pure need.

Like deontologism, consequentialism has shortcomings. There is little clarity around the specific consequences to be measured or what to do when positive consequences for one group result in negative consequences for another. Some critics also argue that focus on the negative side-effects of aid is undeserved, that the link between prolonged conflict and aid is tenuous, and that the harm done by relief aid is comparatively minor relative to other factors.[88] It allows for a legitimate focus on diverse humanitarian agendas. Moreover, it

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[85] Hugo Slim, "Claiming a Humanitarian Imperative: NGOs and the Cultivation of Humanitarian Duty" (paper presented at the 7th Annual Conference of Webster University on Humanitarian Value, Geneva, 2002).

[86] Despite this, humanitarian agencies are reluctant to admit problems in their humanitarian programming, largely as a result of competition for limited funding from donors.

[87] IRIN. "Aid Policy: The Conundrum of Achieving 'Value for Money' in Fragile States." http://www.irinnews.org/report/93402/aid-policy-the-conundrum-of-achieving-value-for-money-in-fragile-states, 6 September 2013.

[88] John Borton, *The State of the International Humanitarian System* (London Overseas Development Institute, 1998), 3.

enables agencies to define their own goals and simultaneously ignore those of others. It results in a loss of distinctiveness between those that act in pure self-interest, those that aim to pursue an altruistic agenda, and those that act with a combination of motives. In doing so, it devalues the power of the humanitarian imperative. Without the right motives, deontologists argue that people may be reduced to objects, leaving aid recipients without hope or long-term prospects for a better life.

Most importantly, an emphasis on outcomes removes attention from the intentions and motivations of actors providing humanitarian aid and allows politics to reign. As such, the debate between deontological and consequentialist ethics is closely related to that between apolitical and political approaches to IHA. Consequentialist ethics are more compatible with openly political approaches to IHA as they can be more easily interpreted to fit with particular political outcomes desired by aid donor governments. As mainstream approaches have hovered towards consequentialism, donor-dominated political preferences have increased their hold over humanitarian agendas. Competition within the system has intensified and organisations are increasingly preoccupied with donor funding and, by consequence, their political interests. While deontological ethical considerations remain rhetorically prominent in humanitarian discourse, decisions regarding an organisation's role, objectives and even presence in a humanitarian crisis are as dependent, if not more dependent, on the political considerations of donors as they are on ethical considerations.[89]

Arguments for guarding against the open introduction of politics into the humanitarian world are strong and numerous and have been foreshadowed in the historical discussion above. In short, the politicisation of the humanitarian agenda is argued to have the potential to result in loss of humanitarian space (as in Somalia); aid conditionality; being interests driven not needs driven; and being geopolitically motivated (as in Bosnia). Further, IHA has been used as a cover for the absence of real political action when required (as in Rwanda). Regardless of the validity of these arguments, the divide between political and apolitical humanitarianism itself seems

[89] Joanna Macrae et al., *Uncertain Power: The Changing Role of Official Donors in Humanitarian Action*, vol. 12 (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2002), 11-12.

disingenuous. Humanitarian aid is intrinsically a political act, whether deontological or consequentialist in nature. It refocuses international attention to and rallies for the protection of those forgotten and/or sacrificed by the international system. Humanitarianism's desire for norm diffusion, legal reform and international frameworks for the deliverance of relief is political. The decision to deliver principled aid, whether guided by tradition or new priorities, is political. This is not to say further action is not required to make real impact in some crisis settings, but simply that humanitarianism should be understood as political, whatever its form.[90] Indeed, it is the willingness of some agencies to *overtly* accept political considerations as helpful or necessary to humanitarian action that divides actors.

Evidence suggests that a combination of political perspectives motivate staff across the humanitarian spectrum.[91] Indeed, with the professionalisation[92] of the sector, many staff migrate between organisations with different mandates and ethical and operational principles in the course of their careers. Further, the supposed ideological walls between traditional and non-traditional humanitarian actors are, in Michael Barnett's words, 'porous'.[93] Even individual agencies operate differently according to situation, funding stream and current management. The diversity of perspectives between agencies too, even those on the same end of the ethical/operational spectrum, is vast. Those agencies that promote themselves as apolitical do so for reasons of access, legitimacy and competitive advantage over other providers. The idea that humanitarianism will succeed where politics fails provides traditional humanitarian actors (NGOs, ICRC and UN) with a claim of superiority in their approach to, and effectiveness in, delivering crisis relief.

The constructed dichotomy between political and apolitical traditional humanitarianism is not only incorrect but dangerous. Undoubtedly, humanitarianism can be partially motivated by state self-interest, but likewise it may have a legitimate desire to secure peace and justice and

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[90] Mark Duffield, *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security* (London: Zed Books, 2001), 88.
[91] Barnett and Weiss, "Humanitarianism: A Brief History of the Present," 14.
[92] Silke Roth, "Professionalisation Trends and Inequality: Experiences and Practices in Aid Relationships," *Third World Quarterly* 33, no. 8 (2012): 1460.
[93] Barnett and Weiss, "Humanitarianism: A Brief History of the Present," 15.

relieve suffering. Indeed, the two motivations may not always be incompatible. Categorising certain activities or agencies as apolitical or political has, at times, been unhelpful for conflict resolution and reaching victims. At other times, as discussed above, the conflation of the categories has made aid delivery more difficult. Nevertheless, it becomes clear, on close examination, that the artificial division of the two has as many underlying motivations as does the use of humanitarianism by political actors and should be equally questioned.

Arguments for and against the legitimacy of individual humanitarian actors are closely related to discussions around ethics, principles and politics. Those aligning with traditional views on these topics present themselves as the most legitimate providers of humanitarian aid. The great variation between organisations, even those of the same 'type' (for example, NGOs) makes it difficult to make general claims as to their reputation within the international humanitarian system. Specific organisations will be discussed in more detail in the case study chapters. Suffice to say at this point that the variety of actors now operating in the system have very different and often openly contradictory ideas about how the international humanitarian system should operate and what their role is within this.

Humanitarianism and the Politics of Gender

Since the mid-1990s, gender has held an increasingly prominent place within the account of IHA provided above. Gender, of course, still influenced the international humanitarian system and its recipients before this time, but acknowledgement of this was, for the most part, lacking. Even now, when gender is recognised as a central consideration for ensuring effective and efficient aid, its full impact in the humanitarian space remains largely unacknowledged in public discourse. In the introduction to a new collection on *Women and Wars*, Carol Cohn reminds her reader that 'gender' should be understood as '... a social system which structures hierarchical power relations'[94] comprised of gendered identities, gendered social and institutional structures and gendered symbolic meanings. All three of these aspects impact on and are relevant to discussions of IHA, and gender policy, programming and practice with it.

[94] Carol Cohn, "Women and Wars: Toward a Conceptual Framework," in *Women and Wars*, ed. Carol Cohn (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), 5.

Yet, only gendered identities have made it to the forefront of debate and even here, attention has come late and remains relatively uncritical.

The remainder of this chapter will investigate the relevance of gender within IHA, not only at the accepted level of gendered identities, but also as it influences structures and symbolic meanings within both humanitarian crises and the institutions and communities that respond to them. This section will begin by looking at attention to gender so far within the humanitarian sector, considering how this fits within the historical narrative above, and how this impacts on its form and relevance. Discussion will then turn to focus on areas of IHA where gender has a significant impact, yet remains largely unacknowledged or unaddressed in gender policy and practice and in some cases in academic IR literature. To conclude, some brief commentary will be made on the overall state of gender in IHA today, including considering the impact of this discussion on humanitarian practice in the field. Ultimately, the chapter will argue that the shortcomings of gender in IHA are at least partially a result of the competing discourses and agendas of humanitarianism and the confused position that gender holds (and other political agendas hold) within the practice as a result of this. As foreshadowed in *Chapter One*, gender policy and practice in IHA is also lacking an underpinning feminist ethic. Throughout this discussion, arguments being made will unavoidably include generalisations. The nuances of individual humanitarian providers in particular contexts will be discussed in detail in the case study chapters to follow. The following account seeks only to represent the overarching development of gender within IHA at a macro-level, and acknowledges that there will always be exceptions to this account.

A few points around the use of the terms 'gendered identities', 'gendered symbolism' and 'gendered structures' are appropriate, before continuing. These three concepts should be considered as being mutually reinforcing and highly interrelated, together creating a greater gendered system. The word 'gendered' is used in preference to 'gender' in each of these ideas to highlight that gendering is a process and that expression of that process is changeable. For the sake of intellectual clarity, however, each term is considered separately and defined as follows.

Gendered identities are understood as embodied individuals, who are ascribed certain values, behaviours, roles, interests, abilities, attitudes and personality traits according to the way their gender is constructed. Importantly, self-perception and external perception of one's gendered identity may not be the same. Gendered identities may also fluctuate depending on circumstance and interaction. In this way, gendered identities may be both performative and mutually constituted, or prescriptive and externally constituted. Both formations of gendered identity have relevance for this work. It should be noted, however, that for the most part, in gender policy, programming and practice, the latter form of gendered identity dominates.

Gendered symbolism relates to and reinforces gendered identities and gendered structures, and provides a system of meaning to understand the social interaction of gendered identities. It comprises discourse, and imagery, and relies on encoded ideas about appropriate and inappropriate forms of masculinity and femininity in a given setting. In Cohn and Ruddick's words, gendered symbolism provides:

> ... a set of ways of thinking, images, categories and beliefs which *not only* shape how we experience, understand and represent ourselves as men and women, but which *also* provide a familiar set of metaphors, dichotomies, and values which structure ways of thinking about other aspects of the world.[95]

For the most part, gendered symbolism serves to value dominant and accepted masculine forms over feminine ones.

Gendered structures are equally pervasive, and include not only gendered institutions – humanitarian organisations, governments, religious organisations – but also nations, communities, families and social groups. Each of these contains presumptions about gendered identities and relies on gendered symbolism to operate. Indeed, institutions rely on these structures to be accepted as legitimate and function smoothly. Gendered structures also reify

[95] Carol Cohn and Sara Ruddick, "A Feminist Ethical Perspective on Weapons of Mass Destruction," in *Ethics of Weapons of Mass Destruction: Religious and Secular Perspectives*, eds. Sohali Hashmi and Steven Lee (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 408.

these gendered identities and symbols or reform them based on internal and external factors. Ultimately, these structures are what produce everyday social practices, within formal and non-formal settings. In concert with gendered identities and symbolism, they are where hierarchical gendered power relations and knowledge are most effectively (re)produced and challenged.

Introducing Gender

> Efforts to reduce suffering have habitually focused on control and repair of individual bodies. The social origins of suffering and distress, including poverty and discrimination, even if fleetingly recognized, are set aside.[96]

Gender is one of IHA's many contemporary buzzwords. Following the lead of their colleagues in the development sector, humanitarian organisations, to varying degrees, have increasingly included consideration of gender issues in their policy and programming since the mid-1990s. Supported to do so by their donors (and compelled to do so by donor reporting requirements), humanitarian organisations have sought to address gender inequalities through their policies and programs. For the most part modelled on established development practice,[97] gender-focused interventions have taken the form of both targeted gender actions and gender mainstreaming initiatives, although focused on a narrow understanding of gender as gendered identity. The need for sex-disaggregated data is widely accepted[98] as is the idea that humanitarian crises affect women, men, boys and girls differently, producing both opportunities and threats.[99] Three details are of great significance to this thesis in the story of

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[96] Margaret Lock, "Displacing Suffering: The Reconstruction of Death in North America and Japan," in *Social Suffering*, eds. Anthur Kleinman, Veena Das, and Margaret Lock (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 210.

[97] AusAID, for example, an organisation responsible for both the development and humanitarian programs of the Australian Government, has one gender policy to cover all aid interventions. AusAID. "Promoting Opportunities for All: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment." http://www.ausaid.gov.au/aidissues/Documents/thematic-strategies/gender-equality-strategy.pdf, 8 September 2013.

[98] See: Mazurana et al., *Sex & Age Matter. Improving Humanitarian Response in Emergencies*.

[99] Suzanne Williams, "Conflicts of Interest: Gender in Oxfam's Emergency Response," in *The Postwar Moment: Militaries, Masculinities and International Peacekeeping. Bosnia and the Netherlands*, eds. D. Zarkov and C. Cockburn (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 2002), 85.

gender policy and practice in IHA: its origins and evolution, its late introduction, and its limited focus. All are revealing in understanding the form and shortcomings of gender in IHA today.

History

Gender policy and programming in IHA finds its origins in its sister field of international development assistance, and has been guided by a liberal feminist approach to policy and programming since its inception. Beginning in the 1970s with the women in development (WID) and then women and development (WAD) initiatives, development traditions originated with the objective of adding women's perspectives and needs into existing development processes.[100] This soon expanded to the inclusion of women-focused projects and policies within larger programs.[101] As programming continued, dissatisfaction with this singular focus on women and the restricted impact such initiatives could have resulted in a policy turn – moving from a sole concentration on women, to look at gender more holistically. The move from WID and WAD to the gender and development (GAD) approach was expected to enable development practice to embrace a relational and holistic understanding of gendered power relations and identities as they relate to development.[102] Simply, it was hoped that attention to the operation of gendered social power relations would uncover potential for structural change that could more deeply benefit the development of women and their communities.

The contrast between the WID and GAD agendas is mirrored in, and inspired by, feminist theory in its liberal (WID) and critical (GAD) paradigms. As the name suggests, liberal feminism, like liberalism more generally, focuses on the principle of equality – in this case, gender equality. With a strong history of political activism, liberal feminism is probably the feminist paradigm most well-known in the public sphere. Its positivist methodology, including its claim to a universal (woman) subject also ensures its compatibility with the extant international

[100] Hyndman and de Alwis, "Beyond Gender: Towards a Feminist Analysis of Humanitarianism and Development in Sri Lanka," 214.
[101] Rathgeber, "WID, WAD, GAD: Trends in Research and Practice," 489.
[102] Hyndman and de Alwis, "Beyond Gender: Towards a Feminist Analysis of Humanitarianism and Development in Sri Lanka," 213.

system and the cosmopolitan underpinnings of IHA discussed in *Chapter One*.[103] No substantive structural change is required within the international aid architecture itself for liberal demands to be met: just add women.[104] Critical feminism (GAD), by contrast, finds fault with liberal feminism's positivist methodology, adherence to the idea of a universal subject and acceptance of the international system as unchangeable and, implicitly, as acceptable.[105] Instead, critical feminism embraces the idea of multiple-subjectivity within the category of women, acknowledging and celebrating difference and problematising the notion of an essential 'womanity'. It considers identity and interests to be personal, intersubjectively constituted, and contextually determined. As such, they are also fluid and may, for example, be as reliant or more reliant on ethnicity, caste, class, religion or nationality as they are on gender (although gender will always comprise an aspect of identity/interests). In the aid context, a WID approach thus becomes inappropriate given that the category 'woman' – as a unified interest/identity group, does not exist.

The GAD paradigm and its critical feminist underpinnings provide the basis for most gender discourse and policy initiatives in both humanitarianism and development today. However, they do not represent the realities of programming on the ground.[106] As the description above indicates, the transformative potential of the gender agenda for IHA is great. Yet despite some valiant attempts to implement this agenda by certain organisations,[107] this potential has been lost in policy formulations and operationalisation processes of the international humanitarian system as a whole. In some cases, gender is used simply as a 'bureaucratically comfortable

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[103] J. Ann Tickner, *Gendering World Politics: Issues and Approaches in the Post-Cold War Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 12-13.

[104] Youngs, "Feminist International Relations: A Contradiction in Terms? Or: Why Women and Gender Are Essential to Understanding the World 'We' Live In," 80.

[105] Katrina Lee-Koo, "Feminism," in *An Introduction to International Relations: Australian Perspectives*, eds. Richard Devetak, Anthony Burke, and Jim George (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 83.

[106] Several programming types are now encompassed under the broad umbrella of GAD-based 'gender-equality programming' in IHA – all of which are intended to be guided by context-specific gender analysis. These include, the well-known and probably most widely implemented policy initiative of, gender mainstreaming as well as the above-mentioned targeted actions for gendered identities, plus initiatives focused on dealing with sexual and gender-based violence and a commitment to gender balance within humanitarian agencies.

[107] CARE and Oxfam, for example, have made great progress in gender-sensitive programming.

synonym for women',[108] but in most cases, gender has become shorthand for the individual categories of 'men, women, boys and girls.'[109] These categories are understood to possess different needs and identities, but are most often considered in isolation of the power dynamics that shape the relationships, societies, discourses and systems in which they exist, the intersectionality of their own identities and needs, the multiple subjectivities that exist within these categories and the subjectivities that exist outside of them.

Timing

As noted, discussion of the significance of women and/or gender in *development* aid has been prevalent since the early 1970s. Despite the fact that the modern humanitarian aid architecture was for the most part established by the 1960s (and the ICRC and other key organisations much earlier than this), considerations of gender in *humanitarian* aid were absent prior to the 1990s and scarce and underdeveloped for many organisations into the 2000s. Gender was absent from the first trial edition of the Sphere Handbook for Humanitarian Action in 1997, only to be added as a cross-cutting issue to the later 2000 edition after a gender review.[110] The most widely used interagency publication on gender in IHA – the IASC Gender Handbook – was only published for the first time in 2006. The IASC Gender Marker – created to track financial allocations to gender in humanitarian programs – came into being in 2009.[111]

Gender policy and programming is intimately connected with the push towards a new humanitarian political agenda. Its promotion is closely linked with the human rights agenda and the move by many organisations to address root causes of crisis and improve the sustainability of their programs. Like other political agendas, gender is impacted by its position

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[108] Cynthia Enloe, "Closing Remarks," *International Peacekeeping* 8, no. 2 (2001): 111.

[109] For example: Inter-Agency Standing Committee, "Women, Girls, Boys and Men: Different Needs – Equal Opportunities. Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action."

[110] Carol Schlitt, "Gendering Sphere," *Humanitarian Exchange Magazine* 17(2000), http://www.odihpn.org/humanitarian-exchange-magazine/issue-17/gendering-sphere, 8 September 2013.

[111] Inter-Agency Standing Committee. "IASC Gender Marker - Frequently Asked Questions." UNOCHA, https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/CAP/Gender%20Marker%20FAQ%2029%20July%202011.pdf, 8 September 2013.

as an inherently transformative concept, in a space where competing agendas and discourses endure. Significantly, prior to the push for the overt politicisation of humanitarian aid, discussion of gender was noticeably absent, with any attention to gender-related concerns being solely focused on women. The continued association of gender with a transformative humanitarian agenda is reflected in the reluctance and very different approach of actors preferring a traditional humanitarian approach, most notably the ICRC. Conversely, organisations with roots in development and/or approaching humanitarian aid within a rights-based framework or with a goal of transforming unequal social relations considered gender (or women) earlier and in greater depth. UNHCR, for example, introduced its first Policy on Refugee Women in 1990,[112] and Oxfam launched a gender policy which included specific clauses on emergency response in 1993.[113] The significance of the association of gender with new humanitarian principles can be seen in individual organisations' approaches to the issue. Consider, for example, the difference between the two following approaches to gender in IHA – the first from CARE International, an organisation that actively links emergency response to long-term development programming, and the second from the ICRC.

> CARE International's Humanitarian Mandate is to meet the immediate needs of disaster-affected populations in the poorest communities in the world in a way that also addresses the underlying causes of people's vulnerability. CARE recognizes the link between poverty and gender inequality and the need for humanitarian organizations to design, plan and respond to the needs of affected women, girls, men and boys in ways that promote gender equality.[114]

> ... as a **neutral**, impartial and apolitical institution, it is not the role of the ICRC to engage in controversies of an ideological, religious or political nature, such as the debate about gendered power relations. Highlighting social inequalities in terms of rights and resources and pushing to establish a balance in power relations is a political act incompatible with the neutrality principle.[115]

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[112] UNHCR. "UNHCR Policy on Refugee Women." http://www.unhcr.org/3ba6186810.html, 20 September 2012.

[113] Bridget Byrne and Sally Baden, *Gender, Emergencies and Humanitarian Assistance* (Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, 1995), 48.

[114] CARE International. "CARE International Roster for Emergency Deployment." http://www.care-international.org/View-document-details/662-Gender-in-Emergencies-RED-TOR-Mar-2011.html, 13 April 2013.

[115] Lindsey-Curtet, Florence Tercier Holst-Roness, and Anderson, *Addressing the Needs of Women Affected by Armed Conflict. An ICRC Guidance Document*, 7.

The perceived importance and division between the two organisational identities and their mandates here is clear. On the one hand, CARE sees its role as supporting the rights and needs of people in need across the spectrum of international aid, from humanitarian response to post-crisis recovery and development, focusing on root causes as well as symptoms. The goal of gender equality is therefore important in their mandate to fight against both poverty and injustice as a consequence and cause of humanitarian assistance. On the other hand, the ICRC understands gender more as an analytical tool than a policy priority, arguing that while an appreciation of the specific needs of women may assist in more appropriately addressing vulnerabilities, aiming to transform underlying causes of inequality is inappropriate, citing the principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence in support of this approach. As guardians and founders of these principles, the ICRC exerts significant influence over their interpretation.

Ironically, however, given the ICRC's reasoning, CARE and many other like-minded agencies are also signatories to the RCRC Code of Conduct.[116] CARE, for example, also explicitly refers to the ICRC principles in their policy formulations, this time in support of their own perspective on gender work in IHA:

> CARE adheres to the principle of impartiality so that we provide assistance on the basis of need regardless of race, creed or nationality. CARE is committed to addressing the rights of vulnerable groups, particularly women and children, in times of crisis.[117]

Without making judgement on correct interpretations, the continued desire for all/many organisations to be in line with the ICRC principles is significant. First, it signifies the continued power of both the ICRC and the discourse of traditional humanitarianism, with organisations with a variety of approaches wishing to be perceived to be upholding the core principles. The power of this discourse is supported by a discernible concern that organisations may be perceived as illegitimate humanitarian providers should they not abide by these principles.

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[116] CARE International. "CARE International's Humanitarian Mandate." http://pqdl.care.org/Core%20Library/CI%20humanitarian%20mandate%20statement%20-%20English.pdf, 8 September 2013.
[117] Ibid.

Indeed, even government donor agencies with clear political interests continue to present themselves as abiding by the ICRC principles.[118] Second, it demonstrates the important impact that greater debates within IHA have had on ideas such as gender. As IHA struggles to reconcile historical discourses with contemporary realities and expectations, transformative political objectives struggle to find a comfortable place within the system. This paradox adds an extra complexity to an analysis on gender work in IHA, which might otherwise tell a similar story to that of gender work in development programming.

The full effects of this paradox will be explored throughout the remainder of this thesis. However, it is worth making two key arguments as to its overall effects on gender work in the international humanitarian system in preparation for this. First, and most significantly, to allow the humanitarian tradition of impartiality, neutrality and independence to remain convincing, political agendas such as gender equality must be depoliticised in practice, if not in discourse. The theoretically transformative potential of the gender agenda is often diluted (intentionally or unintentionally), with many activities being reduced to isolated women-only initiatives[119] and/or a process of adding female beneficiaries to existing assistance frameworks.[120] Responses often focus on needs alone, rather than considering power relations and societal structures that work to disadvantage gendered individuals or groups. Assistance programs also have a tendency to make assumptions about vulnerabilities without extensive analysis, relying on pre-existing gendered stereotypes.[121]

In a similar vein, attention to and analysis of gendered inequality is often deprioritised until such a time as more urgent life-saving assistance has been provided. Often termed 'the emergency excuse', gender work is sometimes delayed as a time-consuming optional extra to be considered when immediate needs are under control or when funding allows for (arguably)

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[118] See, for example: AusAID. "Humanitarian Action Policy." http://www.ausaid.gov.au/Publications/Documents/ausaid-hap-dec-11.pdf, 8 September 2013., Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). "International Humanitarian Assistance." http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/acdi-cida.nsf/eng/JUD-24132427-PLC, 8 September 2013.

[119] And particularly those focused on sexual violence.

[120] Hyndman and de Alwis, "Beyond Gender: Towards a Feminist Analysis of Humanitarianism and Development in Sri Lanka," 213.

[121] Byrne and Baden, *Gender, Emergencies and Humanitarian Assistance*, 10.

desirable and non-essential extras.[122] Researchers have documented attitudes of some humanitarian providers who argue that survival – as the ultimate goal of humanitarian assistance – is not dependent on addressing gendered injustices or politics and is sometimes undermined by doing so.[123] Others have argued that humanitarian cultures and frameworks tend to:

> ... favour top-down, donor dependent, expatriate-run operations, reliant on a narrow range of indicators whilst integration of development and gender concerns requires a fuller understanding of gender relations, and more bottom-up, participatory methods.[124]

Likewise, humanitarian programs are often exempt from the same needs assessments, design, appraisal, and monitoring and evaluation requirements of development aid activities due to their humanitarian status. Despite efforts by some actors to address these criticisms, an emergency mindset tends to prevail in most situations. Indeed, as Byrne and Baden noted as early as 1995, even when crises are non-acute, the culture of speed tends to frame gender work as superfluous.[125] IHA's history and the position of political agendas within it greatly affects the quality and form of gender policy and programming across different humanitarian organisations. The extent of these effects varies across agencies depending on mandate and identity, but all are influenced by the competing discourses of humanitarian assistance.

Gendered Identities and Gendered Bodies: The Accepted Liberal Feminist Approach

Regardless of the difference in the depth and focus of gender work across agencies, the majority of humanitarian organisations are restricted in their approach and focus solely on gendered identities. This is at least partially a result of the history of both gender and humanitarianism discussed above. The definition of gender provided in the IASC Gender Handbook, for example, is instructive:

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[122] Eli Stamnes, *The Responsibility to Protect: Integrating Gender Perspectives into Policies and Practices*, vol. 8, Responsibility to Protect (Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2010), 18.
[123] Hyndman and de Alwis, "Beyond Gender: Towards a Feminist Analysis of Humanitarianism and Development in Sri Lanka," 214.
[124] Byrne and Baden, *Gender, Emergencies and Humanitarian Assistance*, 42.
[125] Ibid.

> The term gender refers to the social differences between females and males throughout the life cycle that are learned, and though deeply rooted in every culture, are changeable over time and have wide variations both within and between cultures. 'Gender' determines the roles, power and resources for females and males in any culture.[126]

Designed to guide gender programming throughout the humanitarian space, this definition places emphasis firmly at the level of the individual and their identity within a given culture. The nuances of this definition, particularly the acknowledgement of the fluidity and cultural specificity of gender identity, make it relatively progressive. Certainly, the authors of the IASC Gender Handbook have attempted to take into consideration the insights of academics and practitioners in appreciating the importance of context and changeability for understanding gendered identities and needs. Importantly, however, several significant elements are overlooked in the operationalisation of such an approach.

Broader considerations of the impact of gendered symbols and broader gendered structures and power relations remain missing from IHA policy debates. This limited focus has restricted the possibilities for sustainable change to occur as a result of gender work in IHA. Such an approach fails to appreciate the ways in which society and its practices, systems, discourses, symbols and assumptions are fundamentally gendered, often serving to privilege ideas and actions associated with dominant forms of masculinity over femininities and subordinated masculinities. This definition also fails to appreciate the power and problems of gendered symbolism in gender-focused policy, programming and practice in IHA.

Gendered Symbolism: Vulnerabilities

> If we are to move forward and help to create an enabling environment in which displaced women will become empowered, we must abandon an institutional lens that sees them as vulnerable and confined in order that their individual and collective capacities may be released and their complexities acknowledged.[127]

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[126] Inter-Agency Standing Committee, "Women, Girls, Boys and Men: Different Needs – Equal Opportunities. Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action." 1.

[127] Katharina Samara, "Foreword," in *Vulnerable Bodies: Gender, the UN and the Global Refugee Crisis*, ed. Erin Baines (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), vii.

An analysis of the gendered symbolism operating in the humanitarian space is important on two levels: to understand how existing approaches might be biased, and to explore the possibility of alternative knowledge and subjectivities. The pervasiveness of these symbols can be seen in global media, humanitarian advocacy campaigning and even in the assumptions of some aid workers and their programs on the ground.[128] Their inaccuracies have been noted by many authors and are illustrated in the lived experiences of communities and individuals affected by humanitarian crisis.[129] The impact of gendered symbolism can be profound. In the following discussion, focus is given to prevailing liberal feminist representations of gender in IHA. Within this focus, it should be noted that efforts are being made by many humanitarian providers and the community as a whole to move away from this stereotypical symbolism. On the whole, however, programming on the ground reflects a continued, if not desired, adherence to this iconography and discourse.

As mentioned, gender has become shorthand for 'women, men, boys and girls' in discussions of gender in IHA. Gendered symbolism also tends to fall within these categories. Particularly significant are generalised images of women and children (boys and girls) associated with victimhood, passivity, weakness; and men associated with culpability, aggression and strength. Whether gender policy and practice is approached with these four categories in mind, or is enacted as a focus on women, gendered symbolism in IHA tends to rely on universalised identities. Most dominant of these in representing humanitarian beneficiaries is universalised woman, and by association, her feminised (or orphaned) children.

Dominant representations of the humanitarian subject rely on universal woman rather than a woman particular. Advocates for humanitarian funding tend to display this universal woman as vulnerable, needy and, above all, apolitical. In Hudson's language, women are presented as '... by definition religious, family-oriented, conservative, illiterate and domestic ...'[130] Added to this are western (universalised) conceptions of 'woman' as inherently peaceful, cooperative,

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[128] This point will be returned to through the case study chapters.
[129] See, for example: Rajaram, "Humanitarianism and Representations of the Refugee," 250.
[130] Hudson, "'Doing' Security as Though Humans Matter: A Feminist Perspective on Gender and the Politics of Human Security," 168.

gentle, nurturing (motherly) and empathetic. These symbols are consistent throughout much IHA policy and practice and have a great impact on both the effectiveness of gender-sensitive IHA and its reception in recipient communities. Such representations assume straightforward power asymmetries between men (group) and women (group) that may be rectified by establishing equal social and political power within existing societal systems. This symbolic narrative is reminiscent of Spivak's famous allegory of 'white men saving brown women from brown men'[131] and ignores the way in which gender interacts with other identity markers to sustain social relations in powerful ways.[132] Significantly, reliance on pre-established notions of gender and gender relations highlights an inability to understand the particular characteristics and dynamics of gender relations in any given crisis situation and how these may impact on gendered insecurities.

Baines argues that women are depoliticised and victimised usually for the sake of attracting international public sympathy and funding, and reinforcing the legitimacy of the humanitarian endeavour.[133] In addition, it assists in the ability for attention to gender to remain compatible with the traditional humanitarian narrative discussed so far. Problematic in her individuality, specificity and complexity, the woman particular is dismissed in favour of the symbolic woman victim who is easier to manipulate politically and can be integrated into both cosmopolitan understandings of humanity and dominant understandings of humanitarianism's mandate and core principles. The plight of the universalised woman is often generalised to represent the plight of all women affected by humanitarian crises, thereby providing a powerful symbol of victimhood, vulnerability and 'bare humanity'[134] for donor communities to empathise with or, more likely, to pity.[135] Such an articulation of woman as victim confines the individual humanitarian subject to her body, removing her agency and fixing her in the private, forgotten sphere, while at the same time promoting her hope for liberation from it.[136] Her

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[131] Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak? Speculations on Widow Sacrifice," *Wedge* 7-8 (1985).
[132] Hilary Charlesworth, "Not Waving but Drowning: Gender Mainstreaming and Human Rights in the United Nations," *Harvard Human Rights Journal* 18 (2005): 13.
[133] Baines, *Vulnerable Bodies: Gender, the UN and the Global Refugee Crisis*, 1.
[134] See: C. Sylvester, "Bare Life as a Development/Postcolonial Problematic," *The Geographical Journal* 172, no. 1 (2006).
[135] Terry, *Condemned to Repeat? The Paradox of Humanitarian Action*, 235.
[136] Baines, *Vulnerable Bodies: Gender, the UN and the Global Refugee Crisis*, 9.

deindividualised, depoliticised and dehistoricised existence results in a loss of identity and culture, and promotes a state of eternal insecurity.[137]

Humanitarian organisations often fulfil their gender responsibilities from an abstracted position, making use of one-size-fits-all gender toolkits and following established guidelines drafted by gender experts, usually before the contextual specificities of the field are known.[138] Most rely on the abovementioned symbolism.[139] Further, they tend to seek women's empowerment by simply adding them to existing community and national structures and programs.[140] While gender analysis is sometimes conducted, this usually focuses on the differences between men's and women's physical needs and women's absence from key activities. Attention is not as readily given to the power relations between genders, the particular cultural and historical backgrounds of the disaster/conflict setting of the recipient(s),[141] or the impact of international gender frameworks on recipients collectively or indeed on an individual recipient's own identity security (sense of self).[142] Rarely has gendered identity been considered as a fluid, subjective and constructed form. Instead, a problematically narrow and restrictive dualism between men and women (and sometimes boys and girls) continues to prevail.[143]

On the other side of this dualism, symbolism around manhood and roles in IHA policy and practice can be equally problematic. This is particularly the case when humanitarian assistance is provided in response to conflict-induced displacement and/or in a conflict environment, but is also of relevance in other crisis situations. Whereas organisations and international media often assume women to be vulnerable and at risk in humanitarian settings, men are presented collectively as either absent, self-sufficient or problematic, whether due to their potential roles as combatants, their perceived laziness or their political involvement. Presenting men as

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[137] Malkki, "Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization."
[138] See, for example: UNOCHA, "OCHA Tool Kit: Tools to Support Implementation of OCHA's Policy on Gender Equality."
[139] Rajaram, "Humanitarianism and Representations of the Refugee."
[140] Baines, *Vulnerable Bodies: Gender, the UN and the Global Refugee Crisis*, viii.
[141] Hyndman, *Managing Displacement: Refugees and the Politics of Humanitarianism*, 62.
[142] Rajaram, "Humanitarianism and Representations of the Refugee."
[143] Baines, *Vulnerable Bodies: Gender, the UN and the Global Refugee Crisis*, viii.

beneficiaries of humanitarian aid often appears to be incompatible with and/or harmful to this narrative. Indeed, continuing to see able-bodied men as separate from humanitarian action supports the legitimisation of humanitarian action internationally, with this symbolism used in concert with the symbolic victimhood of women to emphasise the righteousness of IHA. This is demonstrated, for example, by the reluctance, until recently, of humanitarian organisations, to view men as legitimate victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). A 2002 study found that programming to address SGBV against men and boys in conflict situations is 'virtually non-existent'.[144]

Charli Carpenter's work is particularly valuable in demonstrating the effects and power of this symbolism in a conflict-induced humanitarian setting. In her work focused on gender norms and the protection of civilians, Carpenter demonstrates how the civilian immunity norm is inherently gendered, places women and children first, and results in humanitarian assistance being biased against men of fighting age:

> Because the discourse of neutrality is contingent upon avoiding actions that could be interpreted as assisting participants to one side of a conflict, it is typically easier to argue for the right to assist those individuals least perceived as participants. Given the gendered parameters of the immunity norm, and the fact that warring parties generally see adult men as agents during time of war, providing explicit assistance to men can undermine the perception that humanitarian actors are in fact neutral.[145]

Such stereotyping and bias again fails to recognise the plurality of identities and needs within and between groups, making it difficult to acknowledge that men can also be at risk, and women self-sufficient and/or, in some cases, perpetrators of violence.

In other situations, notably in the aftermath of natural disasters, research has shown that men have often been portrayed as 'pampered and lazy patriarchs, self-centred, ignorant,

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[144] Jeanne Ward, *If Not Now, When: Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Refugee, Internally Displaced and Post-Conflict Settings* (New York: Reproductive Health for Refugees Consortium, 2002), 4.
[145] Carpenter, *Innocent Women and Children: Gender, Norms and the Protection of Civilians*, 108.

promiscuous and violent drunkards.'[146] Although, as a group, men are often seen to be privileged over the women in their communities, blanket stereotypical symbolism of this kind is disingenuous and damaging both for the recovery of the men in question and their communities. Social expectations and norms within communities must be considered in analysing local dynamics and needs, including an understanding of how gendered symbolism can produce gendered power relations that may constrain men as much as women. An acknowledgement of the (at least partially) mythical nature of gendered symbols and motifs operating in the humanitarian space is required for gender policy to move away from stereotypical responses. Assessment of gender as a relational identity marker and its interaction with other markers (for example, ethnicity, race, class) is necessary to enable IHA to move past a view of aid recipients as disenfranchised others and instead engage with them productively. It is rarely considered, for example, that some women may have significant interests in maintaining gendered social inequities as they stand, while some men may profit from their removal.[147] When such structural and identity-specific factors are not considered, there is a problematic tendency for humanitarian emergency and suffering to be 'presented as a technical issue, that is, one that is most directly remedied by technical solutions' by humanitarian organisations and their donors.[148] Consequently, contextual issues, such as human rights dimensions, conflict histories or colonial legacies, are omitted from analysis, along with issues related to individual and group identity. Humanitarian agencies are then left to work without appropriate contextual history, increasing the danger of acting without appropriate sensitivity in the given situation, placing both aid recipient and provider at risk.[149]

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[146] P. Mishra, "Let's Share the Stage: Involving Men in Gender Equality and Disaster Risk Reduction," in *Women, Gender and Disaster: Global Issues and Initiatives*, eds. E. Enarson and P. G. Dhar Chakrabarti (New Delhi: SAGE, 2009), 31.

[147] Andrea Cornwall, "Myths to Live By? Female Solidarity and Female Autonomy Reconsidered," in *Gender Myths & Feminist Fables: The Struggle for Interpretive Power in Gender and Development*, eds. Andrea Cornwall, Elizabeth Harrison, and Ann Whitehead (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 160.

[148] Angela Raven-Roberts, "Gender Mainstreaming in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Talking the Talk, Tripping Over the Walk," in *Gender, Conflict and Peacekeeping*, eds. Dyan Mazurana, Angela Raven-Roberts, and Jane Parpart (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 45.

[149] Ibid.

Gendered Structures

Perhaps the most under-addressed gendered aspect of IHA is the structures and institutions under which it operates. This is by no means a comment on the significance of the impact of gender on shaping these structures and institutions, but rather a comment on the reluctance of the humanitarian community, until recently, to practice self-reflection and self-evaluation.[150] However, with the turn to an overt focus on politics since the 1990s came an increased focus on results from humanitarian action and a new willingness for scrutiny of the system as a whole both internally and externally. It is from this turn that much of the above commentary is drawn. Even now, however, gendered analysis at the level of systems, structures and organisational practices remains very limited.[151] Yet aid providers – from UN agencies to INGOs to donor states and the broader international community – are neither neutral nor ungendered entities. With the aid missions they deploy, each contains its own specific prejudices and norms as does the system as a whole.[152] This section will examine key issues that traverse the interconnected levels at which the gendering of IHA operates from the international community and international humanitarian system, to humanitarian institutions, to the field. In each, gendered norms and values play an important role in shaping actions and ideas within structures and as such, should be given further attention.

Gender plays an important role in the structure and interactions of the international humanitarian community, including both donor states (individually and collectively) and humanitarian organisations. This can be seen in two major areas – first, in the international community's interaction with recipient communities of humanitarian aid, and second in the prioritisation of humanitarian assistance on the global stage. In the first of these instances, the discussion above around gendered symbolism and victimhood becomes important. As noted above, gendered symbolism operating in the humanitarian space promotes a female beneficiary for humanitarian assistance, and often discounts the possibility of male

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[150] Raymond Apthorpe and Ann Nevile, *Managing Emergency Humanitarian Aid Evaluation: Lessons from Experience*, vol. 12 (Canberra: AusAID, 1998), 10.

[151] Baines, *Vulnerable Bodies: Gender, the UN and the Global Refugee Crisis*, 3.

[152] Cynthia Enloe, "What if Patriarchy is "the Big Picture"? An Afterword," in *Gender, Conflict and Peacekeeping*, eds. Dyan Mazurana, Angela Raven-Roberts, and Jane Parpart (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 282.

vulnerability. Structurally, the promotion of feminised victimhood extends broadly to the inter-state relationships that function between donor and recipient communities of humanitarian aid, resulting in a paternalistic relationship forming between the international aid community and local recipient community. Operating at multiple levels, the narrative of a benevolent masculinised outsider saving a hopeless feminised stranger dominates and structures relationships between donor and aid communities in the developing world.[153]

The structural inequities existing in the international sphere are reinforced through gendered and racialised symbolism. This relationship is reminiscent of postcolonial protestations against the portrayal of colonial communities as weak, passive, irrational, and lacking in the capacity and skill to save themselves.[154] Furthermore, it continues to impact the way in which humanitarian policies and practices are formulated and implemented on the ground. Several humanitarian organisations now pay lip-service and in some cases even make valiant attempts to include recipient communities in the planning and provision of assistance. Despite this, more often than not, efforts are driven from the outside with policies and practices representing external matrices of intelligibility and not often reflecting or being receptive to local knowledge and ideas.[155] At the field level, the impact of this gendered structure is seen in various hierarchies of humanity that play out during a crisis. Although international humanitarian workers are placed in the same context as local humanitarian workers, they (and the system they represent) are considered to be intrinsically virtuous and framed as self-sacrificing benevolent (masculine) protectors in a way that local workers are not.[156] Furthermore, the lives of expatriates are valued more highly than those of the local population, reflecting the power imbalance between them. This is demonstrated, for example, by the frequent evacuation of international humanitarian aid workers (and other expatriates) from crisis situations, where local workers and citizens are left behind. Most recently, this was

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[153] A notable exception to this exists where humanitarian crises are geographically located in the developed world. This is especially true when the crisis is considered to be 'natural'.
[154] Cohn, "Women and Wars: Toward a Conceptual Framework," 15.
[155] V. Spike Peterson, "Thinking Through Intersectionality and War," *Race, Gender and Class* 14, no. 3/4 (2007): 14.
[156] Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present*, 231-33.

seen in South Sudan, where hundreds of foreign nationals were evacuated following increased violence across the country in December 2013.[157]

This structural disparity is representative of the perceived worth and significance not only of different nationalities but also of certain ways of being and acting in the international system. The first, presented as representative of the humanitarian community, is associated with dominant masculine characteristics – strength, power, knowledge and rationality, while the second, presented as representative of recipient communities, is feminised, embodying weakness, fear and ignorance. These representations authorise humanitarian workers, organisations and institutions to act as they see fit, because they are believed to know best and are untainted by the politics and irrationalities of the local population. As Fassin explains:

> ... the inequality between expatriates and nationals represents the manifestation within humanitarian organizations of the inequality between benefactors and victims. It would obviously be wrong to ignore the extent to which both these inequalities, far from being unique to humanitarian actors, are set within contemporary moral economies: the inequality of lives, often invisible, is one of their foundations.[158]

Although omitting the gender dimension of these moral economies, Fassin's reasoning points to the continued divisions and power hierarchies within the cosmopolitan world order advocated for by many humanitarian activists.

At the structural level of institutional culture, gendered symbolism also plays an important role. In humanitarian assistance, certain types of activities and approaches are masculinised and others feminised, with a resulting skewed perspective of needs and priorities. The relationship between the humanitarian and development agendas within the greater aid system also plays an important role in illuminating this dynamic. Suzanne Williams points to the stereotypical association of the urgent, quantitative, technical responses of humanitarianism with the masculine, and the softer, qualitative, considered approach of

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[157] For example: Heather Saul, "Foreign Office to Evacuate 150 Britons from South Sudan," *The Independent*, 19 December 2013.
[158] Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present*, 242.

development with the feminine.[159] She contends that both within humanitarian missions and in the context of the greater aid system those actions considered masculine are valued and structurally privileged over those associated with the feminine, demonstrated by the greater ability for masculine activities to attract funding. Indeed, since the 1990s, donors increased humanitarian assistance allocations fivefold, while long-term aid allocations more strongly focused on social justice and transformation has decreased.[160] In this way, the prioritisation of objectives, the conduct of missions and organisational structures are, in themselves, gendered in a way that serves to reinforce the perception that gender issues (amongst others[161]) are of secondary concern, at least in missions that are defined as primarily humanitarian. As humanitarianism is increasingly subject to security procedures and associated with the ambiguously termed 'humanitarian (military) intervention', this masculinisation of objectives becomes even more marked. As a result, gender (and cultural) differences are often dismissed in the initial phases of a humanitarian response, left until 'immediate' dangers are alleviated. As Cynthia Enloe expresses:

> Expending serious analytic resources – time, money, staff, authority – on women's experiences in order to sort out when and where gendered dynamics are at work is a mere indulgence. And who can afford indulgence when time, money, staff and authority are in such short supply? 'This isn't a college seminar, you know. We've got a crisis here.'[162]

The importance of 'hitting the ground running' seemingly leaves little time for such considerations as culture and gender training. These, it seems, are to be left for after the 'hard' (masculine) work is done, when there is time for such (feminine) 'luxuries'.[163] As a result, gender policies, for example, even when given an important status in organisational discourse, are often left to be implemented by almost exclusively female 'gender coordinators' and are

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[159] Williams, "Conflicts of Interest: Gender in Oxfam's Emergency Response," 90.
[160] Wenona Giles, "Women Forced to Flee: Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons," in *Women and Wars*, ed. Carol Cohn (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013).
[161] Other social justice issues – for example, disability inclusion and education – are also subject to this fate.
[162] Enloe, "What if Patriarchy is "the Big Picture"? An Afterword," 280.
[163] Hyndman and de Alwis, "Beyond Gender: Towards a Feminist Analysis of Humanitarianism and Development in Sri Lanka," 215.

repeatedly under-resourced.[164] Likewise, international engagement with feminism has been uneven and selective, despite rhetoric to the contrary. This is especially noteworthy, given that feminist agendas are often more readily associated with transformative development agendas than 'neutral' humanitarianism as noted above. As Dianne Otto expresses:

> The Security Council resolutions illustrate a number of major problems for feminists, which have emerged from institutional incorporation. These problems include a pattern of selective engagement with feminist ideas as they are instrumentalised to serve institutional purposes: an across-the-board absence of accountability mechanisms, even as outside pressure for accountability mechanisms grows; and the tendency for protective stereotypes of women to normatively re-emerge following an initial flirtation with more active and autonomous representations.[165]

At the same time, staff operating within organisations with strong gendered discourse and norms are often unable to question biases, for fear that they themselves might be perceived as incompetent or not understanding important organisational priorities.[166] Combined with the already fragile place most aid recipients hold in the international system, gendered institutional biases may have long-term consequences for populations, exacerbate negatively gendered or cultural power relations and, in the short term, create an increased lack of security for many peoples.[167]

Concluding Comments

> We cannot know why the world suffers. But we can know how the world decides that some suffering shall come to some persons and not to others.[168]

New humanitarianism unambiguously operates in the political realm.[169] While an apolitical IHA may have never been a reality, the increasing influence of states, and their funding

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[164] Ibid., 217.
[165] Dianne Otto, "The Exile of Inclusion: Reflections on Gender Issues in International Law over the Last Decade," *Melbourne Journal of International Law* 10, no. 1 (2009): 12.
[166] Cohn, "Women and Wars: Toward a Conceptual Framework," 18.
[167] Williams, "Conflicts of Interest: Gender in Oxfam's Emergency Response," 89.
[168] Guido Calabresi and Philip Bobbitt, *Tragic Choices* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), 17.

contributions, combined with the primacy of rights-based international norms, has now '... compel[led] aid agencies to incorporate practices once defined as political and thus outside the bounds of acceptable company.'[170] Most providers now incorporate, at some level, consideration of human rights, gender, environment, disability, HIV/AIDS and a range of other obstacles to equality. Of these, gender has historically been and continues to be one of the most frequently accepted policy considerations and certainly holds the attention of the international community.[171]

Yet, as the above discussion has demonstrated, the significance of gender for IHA is much more pervasive than is currently accepted. It is also much more intimately connected with the culture and history both of individual crisis settings and of the international humanitarian system itself. This chapter has sought to shed some light on the ways in which the history, discourses and biases of the international humanitarian system have influenced and are influenced by gender. However, it is only possible to understand the extent of this relationship fully by considering specific circumstances of and responses to contemporary humanitarian crises in recent times. In examining the case studies that follow, it is possible to understand at a more grassroots level how and why gender both affects and is affected by the international humanitarian system, thereby helping to understand what influences the conceptualisation and implementation of gender policy and practice in IHA.

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[169] Warner, "The Politics of the Political/Humanitarian Divide."
[170] Michael Barnett, "Evolution Without Progress? Humanitarianism in a World of Hurt," *International Organization* 63, no. 4 (2009): 653.
[171] See: Sari Kouvo, *Making Just Rights?: Mainstreaming Women's Human Rights and a Gender Perspective* (Stockholm: Iustus Forlag, 2004), 171-75.

PART TWO

Chapter Three:
Displacement –
UNHCR in Post-independence South Sudan

> When we arrived in El Fuj [border crossing point] we stayed there for one week. We were very tired from walking and not eating. We were given a little bit of food and then came here 12 days ago. We have not been given anything here. We have no plastic sheeting, no food. We are eating leaves from the trees, but it is not enough, people are getting sick. And there is not enough water. There was a food distribution today, but we have not received anything. I have 7 children and no food to give them.
>
> –A 34-year-old mother of 7 children in the temporary refugee sites in Upper Nile State, South Sudan, June 2012[1]

> Violence against us was happening all the time. Raping was happening frequently ... It is so common. Who would you tell? Everyone is beaten.
>
> –Adult female focus group participant, Yida Refugee Camp, South Sudan, February 2012[2]

> Our small children could not walk far. My wife and our 11-year-old each carried the twins, who are one year old, on their backs. I was carrying our food and belongings. The others – who are aged nine, seven and four – had to walk by themselves. The four-year-old can walk, but after a while he started crying. When we were on the way, the children were very hungry. Some of them were sick with diarrhoea. The sun was hot. We drank water that was not clean. But we managed to reach this camp.
>
> –A 33-year-old man, Doro refugee camp, South Sudan, December 2011[3]

South Sudan gained independence on 9 July 2011 – a momentous occasion. After decades of war, the new country now looks towards its challenging future. Violence continues within South Sudan and across the border, and persistent rebel groups and militias contribute to ongoing civilian insecurity. Seasonal flooding, disease outbreaks and increasing food insecurity

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[1] Cited in MSF International. "South Sudan: Refugee Testimonies." http://www.msf.org/msf/articles/2012/06/south-sudan-refugee-testimony.cfm, 30 June 2012.
[2] Cited in International Rescue Committee, *The Condition of Women and Girls in Yida Refugee Camp, South Sudan. A Reproductive Health and Gender-Based Violence Rapid Assessment* (Unity State, South Sudan: International Rescue Committee, February 2012), 5.
[3] Cited in MSF International. "South Sudan: Testimonies, December 2011." http://www.msf.org/msf/articles/2011/12/en/south-sudan-testimonies-december-2011.cfm, 30 June 2012.

accompany the journey of more than 350,000 South Sudanese returnees from Sudan, in addition to the fluctuating numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons already in country.[4] Amidst these perilous circumstances, the international humanitarian system, along with the fledgling Government of South Sudan, works to meet the ever-growing needs of a desperate population. The task is daunting and the situation for those in South Sudan is increasingly distressing. As the cluster lead for protection, and the multi-sector lead for emergency returns and refugees, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) plays a significant role in relief efforts to assist and protect the affected populations of South Sudan.

The testimonies above provide a glimpse into the lives of just three of UNHCR's 'persons of concern'.[5] In the enormity of South Sudan's displacement crisis, such stories are common. Yet this does not reduce the importance of their specificity or the relevance of the experience and identity of each individual (or group) in working towards an improved security situation. As we see above, an individual's *gendered* identities, experiences and roles (amongst other factors) are particularly significant in this regard. These examples point, for instance, to the roles and responsibilities of motherhood and caregiving in the context of displacement, the gendered nature of violence in camp life, and even the gendering of responsibilities during flight (in this case, the mother and daughter being responsible for the children, the father for material possessions). Significantly, while in each instance gender may be considered important in assessing the needs of displaced persons and shaping the following response, this does not imply that all persons of the same gender will necessarily have the same experiences or needs or be subject to the same gendered power relations publically or privately. Gender is relevant not only in the context of violence and exploitation, but also in the relationships and roles that tend to be associated with different gendered identities. Gendered identities and needs are fluid and changeable, and intersect with other vulnerability and diversity factors – a fact that

[4] UNOCHA, *South Sudan 2012 Consolidated Appeal* (New York: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2012), vi.

[5] 'Persons of concern' are all populations whose humanitarian needs are of interest to UNHCR. See: Kate Jastram and Marilyn Achiron, "Refugee Protection: A Guide to International Refugee Law." (Geneva: Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2001), http://www.unhcr.org/3d4aba564.html, 23, 20 September 2012.

UNHCR acknowledge in their progressive age, gender and diversity mainstreaming (AGDM) policy.[6]

The United Nations (UN) system has been one of the strongest proponents of gender-sensitive programming in humanitarian crises. Indeed, the UN and its agencies have led the way in promoting international recognition for the importance of gender mainstreaming and its implementation across the humanitarian world. Within the UN system, UNHCR is a recognised leader in gender-sensitive programming in humanitarian assistance, taking a policy approach that recognises and mainstreams the intersectionality and diversity of needs and priorities within displaced communities.[7] Yet recent evaluations and commentary have pointed to a continuing divide between policy aspirations and the realities of implementation.

As the previous chapters have suggested, gender and gendered politics are inherent within all humanitarian assistance projects. This chapter begins this thesis's investigation into the gendered realities embedded within specific humanitarian responses. Focusing primarily on the 'gender' component of UNHCR's AGDM policy, this chapter examines UNHCR's work in post-independence South Sudan. The chapter considers the realities of implementing gender-sensitive policy in an ongoing crisis situation. It questions what has influenced the way in which gender is conceptualised (both at headquarters and in the field) and what has shaped the way it is implemented by UNHCR. In this way, the chapter argues that there is a large divergence between UNHCR's gender policy framework and its implementation in practice in the case of South Sudan. This divergence is a result of both contextual circumstances and the return, in practice, to relying on liberal feminist principles for engagement.

The analysis of the structural and contextual determinants of approaches to gender issues is focused around three key areas: implementing organisation (in this case UNHCR), response

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[6] UNHCR. "Age, Gender and Diversity Policy: Working with People and Communities for Equality and Protection." http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4def34f6887.html, 25 February 2011.

[7] This is supported by targeted action on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), through a new and ambitious SGBV strategy released in February 2012. See: ———, "Action against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence: An Updated Strategy." (Geneva: UNHCR, Division of International Protection, June 2011), http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/4e01ffeb2.pdf, 2 September, 2012.

context (a developing, fragile and conflict-affected state), and emergency type (a displacement crisis). These three areas will be addressed in each of the case study chapters, with varying emphasis as appropriate for the case. They have been chosen to frame discussions for two major reasons. Most importantly, across all field research, these three factors were repeatedly raised by participants as being significant in understanding the approach and outcome of the given humanitarian response. Also, these factors demonstrate the variability of the environment and structures under which any given humanitarian response takes place. Examining each across differing responses underlines the importance of considering case studies to highlight overall trends in the greater system. Each case study chapter then presents a discussion of how a critical feminist ethics of care (CFEC) might have induced a different outcome.

As such, this case will proceed as follows. First, some background information concerning the contemporary situation of South Sudan and the gender response to displacement crises is provided. Second, the method and scope of the case study is outlined, noting some of the methodological difficulties encountered in conducting this research that are particularly relevant in this context. Third, the chapter turns to a discussion of UNHCR's policy development on gender issues and current state of practice. Fourth, the chapter addresses the issues of organisational identity, context and emergency type and considers their impact in the South Sudanese context. Finally, some discussion is provided on the impact of the guiding theoretical framework for gender policy in this context, arguing ultimately that a CFEC may have improved implementation on the ground.

Gender and Complex Emergencies – Displacement and Protection

It is difficult to make generalisations about the state of gender work in complex emergencies. With so many actors and competing mandates operating within a single response effort, attention to gender and implementation of gender policy is variable. In South Sudan, there are currently nine clusters operating (education; food security and livelihoods; health; logistics; emergency telecommunications; non-food items and emergency shelter; nutrition; protection; and water, sanitation and hygiene; education) and hundreds of agencies working under them.

There are more than 30 agencies working under the UNHCR-led protection cluster alone, for example. For this reason, this section will be kept short, with full discussion of the particular work of UNHCR in this context to continue later in this chapter. A few points are important to note before moving on, however.

The first is that, despite the diversity of roles and mandates, all organisations working within the global humanitarian cluster system are subject to the policies and guidelines of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). This body, established in 1992, is charged with developing and agreeing on system-wide humanitarian policies. Notably, the IASC also operates both the Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and the Sub-Working Group on Gender in Humanitarian Action. These bodies are responsible for the two IASC initiatives on gender in humanitarian action and gender-based violence interventions, discussed throughout this thesis. As such, in line with the IASC's policies and guidelines, all clusters and sub-clusters working through UNOCHA's coordination system[8] are committed to attending to gender throughout their own humanitarian responses. This is different to, for example, Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) national societies, which are coordinated by the national government and not UNOCHA (as will be discussed in *Chapter Five*).

The second is that UNHCR holds a place of great importance within the international humanitarian system. In addition to being mandated to lead and coordinate the international response to refugee crises, UNHCR also acts as the global cluster lead (with the International Organisation for Migration) for emergency shelter, camp coordination/management and protection in situations of internal displacement.[9] This means that UNHCR is able to exert significant influence over the way in which issues are prioritised and approached broadly in refugee crises and within these three sectors particularly during other displacement emergencies. As cluster lead, UNHCR is not only accountable to the country-level Humanitarian Coordinator for ensuring an effective and timely assessment response, but is

[8] For more details on UNOCHA's role and mandate, see: UNOCHA. "Coordination." http://www.unocha.org/what-we-do/coordination/overview#, 11 September 2013.
[9] UN Business. "What Are UN Clusters?" http://business.un.org/en/documents/249, 11 September 2013.

also responsible for working with other cluster leads to address cross-cutting issues, such as gender equality. In addition, as lead on protection, UNHCR has ultimate oversight of the sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) sub-cluster, which is administered by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), but falls under the protection cluster. As a cluster lead, UNHCR has full membership of the IASC and plays a role in shaping its agenda. As such, the position of UNHCR on gender issues is of great relevance to the overall response to a complex emergency, and to some extent, UNHCR may shape the gender response.

Gender in South Sudan: The Long-lasting Effects of Prolonged Conflict

As a new nation, South Sudan is still an unknown entity. From its natural beauty to its social structures, this country has not been subject to the same level of anthropological, social and scientific research as have other countries suffering complex humanitarian crises. This has largely been a result of its prolonged state of crisis, minimal infrastructure and situation of political uniqueness. As such, it is difficult to make claims about the state of gender relations in the country, with this difficulty exacerbated by the cultural diversity that exists within the new nation. For this reason, the following outline of gender issues should be treated with caution and should not be considered to be representative of all communities or individuals. Having said that, gender inequality, harmful traditional practices and a lack of women's and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and intersex (LGBTI) rights appear to remain strong in this context. As it is not possible to give a comprehensive assessment of the gender issues requiring action in South Sudan, the following account will focus on several overarching gender-based concerns that hint at the embedded problematic gender structures in the country.

The first of these is SGBV. This includes, but is not limited to, early and/or forced marriage, intimate partner violence, and stranger violence – particularly militarised stranger violence. The longstanding militarisation of South Sudanese society has significantly worsened extra-marital SGBV, and stigma surrounding SGBV survivors makes it difficult to attain reliable statistics about the depth and breadth of this issue. Prevailing gendered attitudes that

condone SGBV and attribute blame to survivors further exacerbate the negative impacts of the violence. Intimate partner violence and forced marriage are routinely practiced in South Sudanese communities, including in refugee and host communities. A recent assessment of SGBV in South Sudan found that, out of a sample of 680 respondents, 68% of females and 63% of males asserted that 'there are times when a woman deserves to be beaten.'[10]

In areas with a military presence, a lack of resources has driven women to act as military prostitutes, or exchange sex for food and other items. [11] Beatings and assaults by soldiers appear frequent and women experience an increased risk of sexual violence when required to travel long distances to collect water or firewood. Female genital mutilation is practiced in some communities, although appears to be much less common in South Sudan than in neighbouring Sudan.[12] Importantly, public law enforcement throughout the country on these issues is often absent and incidents are frequently dealt with under customary or traditional law, which often support perpetrators of abuse. SGBV survivors are often accused of adultery, forced to marry their attackers, jailed or beaten.[13]

Early and/or forced marriage is a serious concern and potential human rights violation. With marriage associated with a large bride dowry, young girls are frequently married to older men. This affects their quality of life, from their personal safety and security, to their education and health. Girls are habitually forced out of school once married, and become pregnant in their early teens, resulting in increased health risks, such as obstetric fistula.[14] Early pregnancy is a

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[10] IRIN. "South Sudan's Gender Gap Still Too Wide." http://www.irinnews.org/report/97616/south-sudan-s-gender-gap-still-too-wide, 11 September 2013.

[11] Guido Ambroso et al., *Flooding Across the Border: A Review of UNHCR's Response to the Sudanese Refugee Emergency in South Sudan* (Geneva: Policy Development and Evaluation Service, UNHCR, July 2013).

[12] Iben Merrild, *Female Genital Mutilation in Sudan: The Complexities of Eradication* (Santiago: Centre for the Study of Religion and Politics, University of St Andrews, 2011).

[13] Ambroso et al., *Flooding Across the Border: A Review of UNHCR's Response to the Sudanese Refugee Emergency in South Sudan*, 23.

[14] Human Rights Watch. ""This Old Man Can Feed Us, You Will Marry Him": Child and Forced Marriage in South Sudan." http://southsudanprotectioncluster.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2013/03/2013-03-HRW-ForcedMarriage.pdf, 11 September 2013, 26.

major cause for South Sudan's maternal mortality rate – one of the highest in the world[15] – and maternal health care is rarely available.

Economic and social inequality similarly falls down gender lines and is closely linked to SGBV. For example, high bride prices leave women with little recourse for divorce, where such an action would require the repayment of dowry. While women have little ability to achieve economic empowerment on their own, the ability to leave violent marriages, without the support of family, is nearly non-existent. This support is rarely given. Where divorce is possible, custody of any children automatically lies with the father, forcing women to choose between their children and an escape from an abusive marriage. Wife inheritance[16] is also practised when a married woman is widowed. Non-traditional interpretations of gender roles are not well supported and women's participation in public life remains low.[17] Moreover, homosexuality has been culturally and legally rejected as an unnatural act, including in public statements by key members of government.[18]

Case Study Background and Method

This chapter is based primarily on semi-structured interviews conducted with UNHCR staff from June to September 2012. Participants were overwhelmingly staff working at UNHCR's headquarters in Geneva, interviewed during a field visit in June to July 2012. As a research trip to South Sudan was not possible at the time of the fieldwork because of security concerns, UNHCR staff in South Sudan were invited to participate remotely from Juba and phone interviews were conducted with relevant staff members in August and September 2012. Interviews are supported by analysis of the extensive primary and secondary written sources relevant to this study. This includes, importantly, analysis of internal policy documents and project designs and evaluations that are not readily available to the public and were provided

[15] IRIN, "South Sudan's Gender Gap Still Too Wide."
[16] Wife inheritance (or widow inheritance) refers to the practice of marrying a widowed woman to her deceased husband's brother, or other close male relative.
[17] This is despite a 25% quota allocated for women in decision-making structures. Nada Mustafa Ali, *Gender and Statebuilding in South Sudan* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, December 2011).
[18] Sudan Tribune. "Homosexuality Will Not Be Tolerated, Says South Sudan President." http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article35815, 11 September 2013.

to me by contacts within UNHCR. These written sources assist in providing a fuller picture of the way gender is conceptualised and implemented across the agency and are important in providing the detail not able to be obtained from distance interviews.

It is worth reflecting briefly here on some of the methodological difficulties encountered in conducting this research, for all case studies, but most notably for this one. To begin, the use of semi-structured interviews had mixed success in extricating the sought information. At worst, some interviewees were reluctant to engage on a deep level and adhered to policy lines with little reflection. At best, the research elicited deep reflections on the role and adequacy of gender within humanitarian assistance, and how this affected individual and organisational work. Overall, although semi-structured interviews were sufficient in acquiring an insightful collection of information from UNHCR's 'discourse community', the research would have benefitted from a more sustained interaction with the agency, particularly as it operated *in situ*.

A second significant drawback to the research was my inability to gain access to the beneficiaries of UNHCR's programs, or to UNHCR staff in South Sudan in person. As a result, the primary material is biased towards the policymakers of humanitarian organisations at headquarters. Although this produces a significant and regrettable power imbalance and is problematic in terms of assessing the effectiveness of gender policy and programming, the research nonetheless offers valuable insight into UNHCR's operations, which may be later complemented by time in country. Further, as the research focuses on what determines the conceptualisation and implementation of gender in UNHCR, rather than an analysis of effectiveness *per se*, the effects of this bias for the research are minimised.

Some difficulties also arose as a result of interviewing primarily lower level staff. These participants were especially cautious in the information they contributed to the research, as they often did not possess the authority to provide sensitive information, or have access to more restricted organisational information. As organisational reputation is important both for

securing donor funding and for acquiring humanitarian access and host government support, participants were at times reluctant to stray from official policy lines in interviews.

Finally, as discussed briefly above, as a new country plagued with decades of sustained civil war both within what is now South Sudan, and between South Sudan and Sudan, South Sudan remains somewhat of a research and statistical black hole. As such, it is difficult to obtain reliable population statistics, information on familial structures, and even birth rates. Added to this, the ethnic diversity that exists within South Sudan increases the variability of social structures and relations, making it extremely difficult to make generalisations about the state of, for example, gender relations and gender equality. Most existing data was gathered prior to South Sudan's independence, and has been discredited as a result of claims that it has been manipulated to align with the political interests of the ruling group.[19] In short, the need for deep qualitative and quantitative research in South Sudan remains great. As a result, it is critical that humanitarian aid programs are designed with a strong consultative approach and based on deep context (including gender) analysis.

From Refugee Women to Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming: Changing the Way UNHCR Does Business?[20]

> What you mean by gender is the needs of women and others, what we call that in UNHCR is AGD – age, gender and diversity. So basically what we are looking at is the whole needs, not only the needs of a population, without properly understanding what might be the different needs of the woman from the man, but also of the child, the boy and the girl, with regards also to age, the elderly, the disabled.
>
> –UNHCR Senior Desk Officer, Geneva, 21 June 2012

UNHCR's first Policy on Refugee Women[21] was released in 1990, closely followed by its Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women[22] a year later. Comparing these documents to

[19] UNOCHA, *South Sudan 2012 Consolidated Appeal*, 13.
[20] Virginia Thomas and Tony Beck, *Changing the Way UNHCR Does Business? An Evaluation of the Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming Strategy, 2004–2009* (Geneva: Policy Development and Evaluation Service, UNHCR, June 2010).
[21] UNHCR, "UNHCR Policy on Refugee Women."

the current AGDM policy and its recognition of intersectionality and multiple discriminations, UNHCR's work on gender seems to have progressed, adapted and evolved in an impressive way. In theory, the gradual development of UNHCR's gender work – from focusing just on refugee women, to mainstreaming gender, to AGDM – represents a strong commitment to implementing evaluation recommendations and to taking heed of calls to recognise the multiple and interconnected sites of oppression and discrimination for gendered individuals.[23] Indeed, of all the policies examined in this thesis, on paper, the AGDM policy lies closest to a CFEC and farthest from liberal feminist approaches. With operationalisation of the policy deeply entwined with UNHCR's participatory assessment framework, AGDM is at the forefront of needs assessments and planning, and implemented in line with a rights-based and community-participation approach:

> Participatory assessment is a process of building partnerships with refugee women and men of all ages and backgrounds by promoting meaningful participation through structured dialogue. Participatory assessment includes holding separate discussions with women, girls, boys, and men, including adolescents, in order to gather accurate information on the specific protection risks they face and the underlying causes, to understand their capacities and to hear their proposed solutions.[24]

On paper, such methodology is impressive. In practice, however, recent evaluations and anecdotal evidence have shown that the ambitions of AGDM policy and its operational reality on the ground diverge considerably. In five out of six thematic areas[25] assessed in a 2010 evaluation, serious constraints to the implementation of AGDM, along with insufficient resourcing and lack of staff commitment, were noted. The only area in which the evaluation found there to be adequate progress was in the integration of AGDM into UNHCR's work. Here, however, it was observed that UNHCR needed '... to move beyond institutionalising participatory "assessment" *per se*, towards an understanding of "assessment" as only the first

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[22] ———. "Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women." http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6b3310.html, 20 September 2012.

[23] Hyndman, *Managing Displacement: Refugees and the Politics of Humanitarianism*, 71.

[24] UNHCR, "The UNHCR Tool for Participatory Assessment in Operations," Geneva, 2006, 1-2.

[25] The six areas assessed reflect the thematic areas of the 2007–2009 AGDM Action Plan: attitudes, leadership and accountability; coordination and partnership; targeted actions for empowerment; integration of AGDM into UNHCR's work; organisational capacity-building; and non-negotiable standards of assistance.

stage of the programming cycle.'[26] In other words, AGDM still required significant attention to ensure that it moved beyond a simple assessment, towards integrating the findings of that assessment (and re-assessments) into programming. In short, implementation of the AGDM policy has been uneven and *ad hoc*, resembles a liberal feminist approach rather than what should be the progressive approach of AGDM, and receives different levels of attention across UNHCR offices. UNHCR is applauded for its innovation and efforts in rolling out an ambitious agenda with AGDM, including establishing a strong accountability framework.[27] However, noting some small successes, the lack of sustained global attention within UNHCR to a comprehensive and meaningful operationalisation of AGDM has limited practical changes in the way UNHCR 'does business'.

These findings are consistent with anecdotal reports and evidence regarding UNHCR's operations in South Sudan since independence in 2011 and in Southern Sudan prior to that. UNHCR's South Sudan operations officially split from operations in Sudan at the beginning of 2012. However, at the time of writing in early 2013, systematic participatory assessments for the new country program had not yet been conducted and continue to be delayed as South Sudan enters its rainy season and confronts heavy flooding.[28] This is despite the record numbers of South Sudanese returning from Sudan since independence, presenting a distinct change in needs from the existing refugee populations, and the fact that an earlier evaluation of the return and reintegration process in South Sudan pointed to a lack of attention to gender issues.[29]

Interviews with UNHCR staff in South Sudan do suggest, however, that participatory assessments incorporating AGDM are now established within the organisation globally,

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[26] Thomas and Beck, *Changing the Way UNHCR Does Business? An Evaluation of the Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming Strategy, 2004–2009*, 5.

[27] Leslie Groves, *UNHCR Accountability Framework for Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming and Targeted Actions* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2010).

[28] Participatory assessments are usually conducted annually in September. Community Services Officer UNHCR South Sudan, Interview with Author, Juba/Canberra (by phone), 18 September 2012.

[29] "The gender dimensions of the return and reintegration process and the phenomenon of ongoing mobility and split households appear to have been largely unacknowledged until now, and merit particular attention in this regard." Mark Duffield, Khassim Diagne, and Vicky Tennant, *Evaluation of UNHCR's Returnee Reintegration Program in Southern Sudan* (Geneva: Policy Development and Evaluation Services, UNHCR, September 2008), 4.

although the quality of those assessments is variable. This again, is consistent with the findings offered by the 2010 AGDM evaluation:

> I do think that the participatory assessments have been established as in the operational guidelines, so if you, I mean you have to do it for your country programming. So that's a success, in terms of it has to happen. How well it's done, in the sense of how well it's being carried out using age and gender as sort of the main criteria, though I don't know how far in the discussions, instead of everything just being lumped in under 'the community says' you know? That I still think that that needs to be worked on.[30]

In addition, staff reported that the majority of 'gender work' that was being carried out could most accurately be described as targeted actions to combat SGBV, based on *ad hoc* reporting and limited conversations with persons of concern.[31] Even here, however, interviewees suggested that programs were minimal and progress limited.

> UNHCR there doesn't have the capacity and neither do any of the partner organisations to assess the situation. They know that there are cases of early marriage, early pregnancy, and there's definitely SGBV cases reported, but there's not much, I mean they don't have a general analysis of the situation. MSF [*Médecins Sans Frontières*] provides medical assistance. There's no psychosocial assistance, which is something that we also obviously generally refer survivors to ... So that's the trend in South Sudan in general. I mean, there are so few services available ...[32]

In short, in both South Sudan specifically and more broadly, available evidence suggests that the desired objective of being 'an organization where age, gender and diversity have been taken into account at all operational levels and have been adequately mainstreamed'[33] is elusive for UNHCR. The question then becomes why this has not been prioritised. The chapter now turns to discuss what has influenced the current conceptualisation and implementation of UNHCR's AGDM policy in South Sudan.

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[30] Community Services Officer UNHCR South Sudan, Interview with Author.
[31] Ibid.
[32] UNHCR headquarters representative, Interview with Author, Geneva, 21 June 2012.
[33] Thomas and Beck, *Changing the Way UNHCR Does Business? An Evaluation of the Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming Strategy, 2004–2009*, 1.

Implementing Organisation: Protection, Participation and Politics: The Contradictions and Consequences of UNHCR's Place within the International Humanitarian System

The history, role and stature of UNHCR within the broader international humanitarian system play a significant role in determining how gender is both conceptualised and implemented (through AGDM) in South Sudan and more broadly. Particularly relevant are its globally legitimised protection mandates, participatory processes, direct work with displaced communities, and confused position in debates regarding humanitarianism and politics. These factors combine to effect a conceptualisation of gender that is both theoretically progressive and pragmatically prone to relapse to previous liberal policy formulations.

Mandated by the UN through its 1950 statute and subsequent General Assembly resolutions, UNHCR has established international legitimacy for its global actions and operations. This established legitimacy to act on behalf of persons of concern affords UNHCR a unique position within the international humanitarian system. Combined with the decentralised and field-oriented structure of the organisation, UNHCR staff possess a level of legitimised autonomy[34] in decisions about programming priorities and implementation frameworks in the field. The appointment of UNHCR as the global cluster lead for protection, emergency returns and refugees (protection being the cluster under which the sub-cluster for SGBV sits, as noted above) increases UNHCR's ability to lead programming and policy decisions on these issues.[35] In this context, UNHCR's decision to initiate the move to the innovative AGDM policy may be partially explained as a way to influence other actors into following this lead, in an attempt to incorporate lessons learned in past operations. It is also likely to be influenced by donor state preferences, upon which UNHCR is financially dependent.[36]

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[34] For a detailed discussion of autonomy in UNHCR, see: Ann McKittrick, "UNHCR as an Autonomous Organisation: Complex Operations and the Case of Kosovo," *RSC Working Paper Series*(2008), http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/publications/working-papers-folder_contents/RSCworkingpaper50.pdf, 11 June 2012.

[35] UNHCR headquarters Senior Community Services Coordinator, Interview with Author, Geneva, 21 June 2012.

[36] The majority of UNHCR's funding comes from a handful of western donor countries, with similar policy and political priorities. UNHCR. "UNHCR Global Report 2012: Donor Profiles." http://www.unhcr.org/51b1d62b0.html, 4 January 2014.

At the same time, UNHCR's rare ability to work directly with persons of concern enhances the likelihood of success for a policy so strongly reliant on community participation and reciprocal relationships. As one UNHCR staff member at headquarters expressed:

> ... you know we are one of the rare organisations that work so directly with persons of concern ... even UNICEF who works with children, hardly works with children directly. All go through government. Everything they do is supporting the government to take care of their children. But for UNHCR, it's very specific to be really so directly in touch with persons of concern ... So they take it [assessments, policy directions] more from us than the other way around.[37]

The ability to interact directly with persons of concern places UNHCR at an advantage in its potential to implement the AGDM policy. Sustained access to displaced populations enables the possibility of real community participation in needs assessment and program design in a way that may not be possible in organisations working more directly through host government institutions.

Paradoxically, however, this ability and access along with the inherently political nature of UNHCR's AGDM work contradicts UNHCR's primary identity as a humanitarian organisation, mandated to perform work of a 'non-political character'.[38] As a rights and community-focused policy, AGDM should engage in political and social transformation for justice and equality. This, certainly, was considered its purpose by UNHCR staff interviewed both at headquarters and in Juba.[39] Yet, when questioned about the effectiveness of the policy, reference to UNHCR's humanitarian character indicated internal struggles – between traditional approaches to international humanitarian assistance (IHA) and transformational (political) agendas. Consistent emphasis was placed on practicality over ideology in this case. The result: an apparent sense of inevitability that, despite best intentions, UNHCR's AGDM objectives were unlikely to be realised.

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[37] UNHCR headquarters representative, "Interview with Author."
[38] "Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees – General Assembly Resolution 428 (V)." Communications and Public Information Service, UNHCR, 5 September 2012.
[39] Community Services Officer UNHCR South Sudan, Interview with Author.

> Our prevention programs are trying to tackle the gender inequality and abuse of power – behavioural change. As a humanitarian organisation, we are also very aware that you need years to do that and that's always our internal struggle as a humanitarian organisation – how, in the long term can we actually make that difference, although we want to, since we are not a development agency? So that is more an internal struggle to see how we can do that. Because we are planned by year only, on an annual planning, annual budget, annual agreements with partners. And one day people can go [start working] again, maybe it's a different situation, so it's very difficult, in that sense to plan properly and actually get to behavioural change.[40]

Frequent allusions to the more comfortable position of gender in long-term, non-urgent, transformative development work highlight the internal struggle between an ideological commitment to the AGDM policy framework and underlying staff reservations that hint at its perceived inappropriateness (both practically and in terms of mandate) for the context in which UNHCR works. This paradox assists in explaining the divergence between the policy and practice of AGDM in UNHCR – a paradox regularly cited in literature on the political/humanitarian divide. As one participant stated, 'we are a humanitarian organisation right? So I'm sure that maybe UN Women or other organisations that have more of a development agenda has done more specifically on gender.'[41] This comment aptly summarises the contradiction between UNHCR's AGDM policy framework and perceived field reality. Indeed, the fact that the participant did not know whether UN Women or other organisations had 'done more specifically on gender' implies that it is not necessarily within UNHCR's ability or purpose to know what is happening in this area. Insufficient organisational capacity and leadership commitment to implement AGDM consistently[42] reflect this internal tension and play a significant role in influencing the implementation realities of AGDM on the ground.

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[40] UNHCR headquarters representative, "Interview with Author."
[41] Community Services Officer UNHCR South Sudan, Interview with Author.
[42] Thomas and Beck, *Changing the Way UNHCR Does Business? An Evaluation of the Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming Strategy, 2004–2009*, 2.

Response Context: South Sudan in the International Humanitarian System

The prevailing culture and context of a humanitarian crisis deeply affects how aid policy, including gender policy will be understood and implemented.[43] In South Sudan, where displacement and population flow have resulted in the coalescence of diverse ethnic groups with distinct customs, this is certainly the case. Here, gendered identities, roles and needs fluctuate as different (gendered) norms and traditions coexist in defined spaces.[44] The position of UNHCR as a global organisation reflecting the interests of aid donor countries shapes interaction with these local societies in distinct ways. Such interactions suggest an inability to engage meaningfully with local context, culture and politics. This has also resulted in an incapacity to adapt pre-existing policy conceptions and frameworks to differing social constructions of gendered identities. As Jennifer Hyndman argues:

> The gender-based policies of humanitarian organizations like UNHCR provide a *grid of intelligibility* for field officers and other staff working with displaced populations. They offer planning tools and checklists to assist in the organization and functioning of camps, but they do not generally allow gender identities or relations to *change* the assumptions of the overall planning context.[45]

The AGDM policy offers the *potential* for meaningful understandings of the layered vulnerability of certain displaced individuals and communities. However, this would require field staff to analyse and engage dutifully with the 'historical context, regional geopolitics, cultural dynamics, and race relations'[46] of UNHCR's beneficiary communities. While UNHCR, as mandated, seeks to remain neutral, AGDM is reduced, at best, to an analysis of age, gender and diversity as stand-alone categories without full understanding of how these factors interact both with each other and the local (political) context. These observations are reinforced by findings of the recent AGDM evaluation, which expressed concerns of displaced persons that participatory assessments 'were something being done to them, rather than with

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[43] See: Miwa Hirono, Jacinta O'Hagan, and Pichamon Yeophantong, "Workshop Summary Paper" (paper presented at the Cultures of Humanitarianism: Perspectives from the Asia-Pacific, Australian National University, 2012).

[44] Ellen Martin, "Gender, Violence and Survival in Juba, Southern Sudan," *HPG Policy Brief*, no. 42 (November 2010).

[45] Jennifer Hyndman, "Feminist Geopolitics Meets Refugee Studies," in *Refugees in International Relations*, eds. Alexander Betts and Gil Loescher (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 172.

them'[47] and further, that it was 'difficult to align global standards of assistance with receptiveness to local diverse needs promoted by AGDM.'[48] In short, the results of AGDM assessments, when conducted, are likely to be limited to UNHCR's pre-existing expectations of needs and experience without much scope for deviation.

Further, as a global organisation operating under the influence (and with the funding contributions) of western donor states, UNHCR exacts significant power and influence over the (less influential) states in which it works – including South Sudan. The power discrepancy between South Sudan and UNHCR was further exacerbated when the Government of South Sudan decided to cease oil production just six months after gaining independence as a result of continued disputes with Sudan over oil transit fees. The shutdown of the oil industry – which provides approximately 98% of South Sudan's revenue – and resulting austerity measures further reduced the government's already limited capacity to provide basic services to its people, thereby increasing dependency on humanitarian agencies and donors to fill these gaps.[49] As such, the suitability of UNHCR's policy frameworks for South Sudan is difficult to question, with the national government having little negotiating capacity or power, and officials at state and county level having even less. The legitimacy of UNHCR's policies on particular social issues, such as gender equality, is unlikely to be challenged. As a newly independent nation, South Sudan has limited capacity to refuse or negotiate global policy frameworks, and is likely to see such frameworks to be relatively inconsequential given the magnitude of the challenges that lie ahead. This is particularly true in the current environment, in which South Sudan is striving to disassociate itself from Omar al-Bashir's Islamist Government in Sudan and align itself with the west, while at the same time facing continuing internal fragility.[50] The consequences of this are twofold. Firstly, it indicates a power imbalance

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[46] Ibid.
[47] Thomas and Beck, *Changing the Way UNHCR Does Business? An Evaluation of the Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming Strategy, 2004–2009*, 3.
[48] Ibid., 7.
[49] Hereward Holland. "South Sudan Oil Shutdown to Increase Food Aid Dependence - UN." Reuters, http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/02/03/sudan-south-food-idUSL5E8D31UY20120203, 3 February 2012.
[50] Andrew Natsios. "Southern Sudan: A New Strategic Ally?" http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2011/08/01/southern-sudan-a-new-strategic-ally/, 20 September 2013.

in the international system and allows for a tokenistic engagement with contextual (and gender) analysis. Secondly, given that delivery approaches are unlikely to change regardless of findings, the Government of South Sudan has little capacity to hold UNHCR accountable for its work. These arguments are supported by a noticeable lack of attention to UNHCR's relationship with the Government of South Sudan, across interviews with UNHCR staff.

The Complex Emergency: Negotiating Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming in Crisis Situations

> So the way that UNHCR sees, the way we try to do our best, always, I just want to say, there's a difference between the theory – what we would like to do – and how successfully this can be implemented. We need to also recognise the limitations of applying the entire concept in a warzone – in a war conflict, you know where we have emergencies coming so the attention is diverted.[51]
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> Now that being said, focus group discussions have been taking place because it's one of the main methods of finding out in the various onsets of emergency, you need to sit down and talk to people of course so, sort of, spontaneous or random discussions have been going on with the community throughout this time, but we haven't had time to organise it properly, because the challenges have been absolutely outrageous in terms of, you know, access by road at the moment. There are no roads. We're flying tractors by helicopter to the area so it's quite severe the whole emergency situation.[52]

The 'emergency' or 'crisis' setting was the most frequent recurring theme amongst interviewees describing the obstacles for the realisation of AGDM in South Sudan. The above examples are just two of many instances where the 'crisis', 'emergency' or 'volatile' situation on the ground was provided as a rationale (if not an excuse) for poor implementation of AGDM in the South Sudanese context. Of course, this does not discount the severity and abundant obstacles to implementation of UNHCR's general relief program in South Sudan. Nor does it discount the efforts (some of which are outlined above) of staff to incorporate AGDM assessment in *ad hoc* ways in difficult circumstances. However, the prioritisation of certain issues and tasks and the deprioritisation of others – including gender and comprehensive

[51] UNHCR headquarters Senior Desk Officer for Chad Sudan and South Sudan, Interview with Author, Geneva, 21 June 2012.
[52] Community Services Officer UNHCR South Sudan, Interview with Author.

participatory assessments – indicates a perception that these issues and tasks do not comprise the core of UNHCR's life-saving work. Given that UNHCR, by definition, regularly operates in such unstable situations, the indication that a perceived emergency justifies the deprioritisation of mainstreamed practices is both worrying and significant. In South Sudan, the emergency mindset has influenced the implementation of AGDM in two major ways.

First, comprehensive AGDM work is being delayed until emergency needs are dealt with. A UNHCR representative in Juba explains:

> ... there is an acknowledgement that it's important that we work with all kinds of groups of people. But at the moment it's a lot about transporting people, making sure literally that they don't die on the spot where they are. So it's about making sure we move people away from the border, that we can register people, that we can give them some food, all of these things. So that has to, you know, the direct life-saving activities have to be prioritised.[53]

As UNHCR staff are compelled by a sense of urgency, in-depth AGDM analysis is delayed for a time in which a culture of speed is not considered essential to success. This practice is certainly not exclusive to UNHCR, and has already been noted above. However, for UNHCR, such rationalisations represent a level of ideological dissonance. After all, it is an organisation that recognised in its core commitments for AGDM that 'the complete realisation of gender equality is an inalienable and indivisible feature of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.'[54] This again can be related back to UNHCR's own internal identity struggle and questions about UNHCR's position relative to traditional and new humanitarian approaches.

Second, as alluded to in the quotation above, the limited assessments that are done during times of emergency are *ad hoc* and sporadic. This does not allow deep levels of communication with participants and may result in a misrepresentation of needs and priorities amongst displaced populations. As one headquarters-based staff member observed, rapid

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[53] Ibid.
[54] UNHCR, "Age, Gender and Diversity Policy: Working with People and Communities for Equality and Protection."

participatory assessments do not provide ample space for a detailed and realistic unpacking of needs, with participating persons of concern often focusing on 'high-level wish-lists' and making impractical requests.[55] In this sense, participatory assessments are unlikely to be representative of the 'multifaceted protection risks and capacities of individuals and communities,'[56] thereby leaving UNHCR in danger of violating the 'do no harm' principle of IHA.

Applying a Critical Feminist Ethics of Care in South Sudan

The approach to gender work offered by UNHCR in its AGDM policy is progressive, and moves past the boundaries of the usual liberal feminist approaches that dominate IHA. However, as noted, in practice, it remains largely ineffective, seeking to push too far against the traditional mandate and operational realities of UNHCR in this context. The full implementation of this policy, if it is achievable, may still be a worthy goal. In the interim, this response effort may benefit from a CFEC approach, grounded in two particular focus areas: relationships of care, and relationships of power. Furthermore, a CFEC may guide the response by its overarching commitment to appreciating the subjectivity of experience, and acknowledging the importance of context (ideas already present in the AGDM framework). The final section of this case study now discusses how this alternative might reframe UNHCR's work in South Sudan centred on the two focus areas.

Focusing on *relationships of care* in the South Sudan context may assist UNHCR in moving past the analysis of age, gender and diversity as stand-alone statistical categories, and instead to emphasising the relationships that develop between these identity markers. Doing so would provide UNHCR with useful information that may help to determine needs more effectively. It would assist in moving past biological categories and age groups to an understanding of the capacities and vulnerabilities of individuals and communities. Consequently, it would unveil places where responsibility for caring is absent, distorted or involuntary, thereby signalling where humanitarian assistance should be provided. This analysis and programming should

[55] UNHCR headquarters Senior Community Services Coordinator, "Interview with Author."
[56] UNHCR, "Age, Gender and Diversity Policy: Working with People and Communities for Equality and Protection."

focus not only on obvious caring relationships that are present, but also those that are missing; for example, where a child's parents have died, or where a key family member has been lost in conflict. This focus may also include consideration of the state's caring responsibilities and failures, the actors (for example, family units, churches or organised aid groups) filling these roles, and the dynamics involved in these relationships. This information would allow UNHCR to target its programs appropriately, without necessarily going beyond its role as a mandated 'non-political actor'.

Examination of and attention to *relationships of power* in this context, would supplement the above focus. This would complement UNHCR's customary emphasis on SGBV well, building on this to understand the full dynamics of violence and other relationships of power and exploitation. This focus entails understanding relationships of power between individuals, organisations and ideas as they exist and fluctuate within zones of conflict, fragility and insecurity. Understanding the place of SGBV (which includes such practices as forced marriage) within these wider power relations is essential to mounting a contextually appropriate response, and may assist UNHCR in doing so. Broader conflict dynamics and intra and inter-state relationships may be significant in determining which programming option may be most likely to be well-accepted and sustainable.

Concluding Comments

> ... even though [UNHCR is] calling it "people-oriented," [it is] getting backlash ... it's not easy. It's easy to critique a person's efforts, but once you're in it, it's not easy.
>
> –Senior NGO staff member, Geneva, 28 October 1994[57]

> I think to some extent the policy has reached people, but I think also, there's been a bit of a backlash, which has a tendency to happen. If there's too much focus on something, then people after a while tend to be like, 'okay.' And then the focus of it drops. And then some new initiative comes up, which is called something else, but it's the same thing with a different name. And everybody is doing that for a while and then it goes down.
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> –Community Services Officer, Juba, 18 September 2012[58]

[57] Cited in Hyndman, *Managing Displacement: Refugees and the Politics of Humanitarianism*, 72.

Over the more than 20 years since UNHCR first systematically addressed the gendered needs of displaced persons, much has changed. Focus, discourse and policy on gender are now more nuanced and sophisticated and there is a wide-ranging acceptance of the importance of considering gender in ensuring relief aid 'does no harm'. At the same time, much remains the same. The two quotations above, the first from 1994 and the second from 2012, are remarkably similar in their sentiments. The operationalisation of a gender lens (whether conceptualised as gender mainstreaming or AGDM) remains difficult. Furthermore, a deep engagement with, appreciation of and commitment to the principles espoused in policy documents remains elusive in the field.

This chapter has argued that three major factors influence the current conceptualisation and implementation of UNHCR's AGDM policy in South Sudan. These same three factors – organisational identity, context and emergency type (or an 'emergency mindset') – prevent the realisation of UNHCR's own AGDM objectives. UNHCR's AGDM policy seeks to effect political change while maintaining an appearance of impartiality – a situation that both produces and is produced by the situational and organisational dynamics discussed in this chapter. Moving beyond this impasse will involve UNHCR either embracing and accepting the political nature of its work or moving away from the political objectives espoused by AGDM, and towards a CFEC.

[58] Community Services Officer UNHCR South Sudan, Interview with Author.

Chapter Four:

Disease –

World Vision's Response to the Cholera Emergency in Papua New Guinea

> During that time, the men they were talking about big things, but the women we cared about the little things – how we could take care of the babies, the children, the house, the cooking. So we were conscious about all these little things because we knew that they would cause disease, especially as related to cholera. So those were the things that we focused on. If you were in town you would have access to a good water supply, but in here we don't have that, so some of these things, little things matter.[1]

On 11 September 2009, the Papua New Guinea (PNG) National Government declared a national health emergency as cholera, a disease hitherto unseen in PNG, began to move across the country. Two months earlier, in July 2009, cholera was reported in Morobe Province on the northeast coast of mainland PNG. The outbreak spread within the province, and then to Madang and East Sepik Provinces in late 2009. By January 2010, cholera had reached the National Capital District, including Port Moresby and nearby Central Province. In the following months, the outbreak spread to Gulf and Western Provinces, finally reaching the Autonomous Region of Bougainville in the early months of 2011. Between 2009 and 2011 more than 15,500 cases of cholera were reported across PNG, with 493 recorded deaths.[2] In Madang, one of the earliest provinces to be affected, the Madang Provincial Health Department issued a cholera alert on 28 October 2009 following the admission of the first cholera patient to the local Modilon General Hospital on 24 October 2009. By 28 October, 73 patients with cholera symptoms were registered at the hospital, and health authorities had begun conducting awareness campaigns. The worst affected area in Madang Province was the Humade area of Sisiak – a squatter settlement located approximately two kilometres north of Madang town with a population of more than 5,000 people. Water, sanitation and hygiene infrastructure

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[1] Female aid recipient 2, Interview with Author, Sisiak Community, Madang, 6 March 2012.

[2] Paul Horwood et al., "Clonal Origins of Vibrio Cholerae O1 El Tor Strains, Papua New Guinea, 2009–2011," *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 14, no. 11 (2011): 2063.

within this area is insufficient and there is limited community knowledge regarding safe hygiene practices.[3]

This scene provides the context for World Vision's humanitarian response to cholera in Madang from 2009 to 2010. This chapter investigates the place of gender within that response. Accompanying the outbreak, humanitarian practitioners and recipient communities reported mixed effects on communities. For some women, it became difficult to reach necessary treatment because of childcare and household responsibilities, access difficulties and fear.[4] At the same time, awareness raising and information about the outbreak did not reach some men, as a result of them being away from their homes during awareness campaigns.[5] In addition, needs and priorities in response differed in a gendered way, as described above, while stigma accompanying the disease was reported to affect women more than men.[6] Each of these factors, and many others, demonstrate the importance of considering gender in the design and delivery of this humanitarian response.

Within the broader context of the multi-agency cholera response,[7] this chapter considers the realities of implementing gender-sensitive policy in this relatively small-scale health-focused emergency relief effort. In particular, the chapter questions what has influenced the way in which gender is understood and put into practice by World Vision staff in PNG. Ultimately, the chapter argues that there was an *ad hoc* approach to gender in this case – one that does not reflect World Vision's policy statements or the international guidelines to which World Vision is a signatory. The practical attention to gender policy in this case was deficient. Where glimpses of attention were seen, these were largely rhetorical, and seemed to reflect a liberal feminist approach to gender.

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[3] World Vision Pacific Development Group, *Project Concept Paper: Madang Cholera Response* 2009 (unpublished), 1.
[4] Female aid recipient 1, Interview with Author, Sisiak Community, Madang, 6 March 2012.
[5] Female aid recipient 2, Interview with Author.
[6] World Vision Pacific Development Group Humanitarian Emergency Affairs Manager, Interview with Author, Port Moresby, 14 March 2012.
[7] Other key agencies in the national cholera response included the PNG Government, *Médecins Sans Frontières*, PNG Red Cross Society, Oxfam Australia, World Health Organization, and AusAID.

To make this argument, this chapter proceeds with the same structure as the preceding one. First, the broad background to this emergency is provided, outlining the relationship between gender policy and health emergencies in the international humanitarian system, and the gendered politics of PNG. Both topics contribute to understanding the role that gender played in World Vision's response to cholera in Madang. Second, the chapter discusses the specific context of this case; namely, the method and scope of the research and an overview of the way in which World Vision's gender policy, programming and practice were theorised and implemented in Madang. In this case, analysis of the implementing organisation, response context and emergency type unveils a divide between global standards and organisational policy, and practical realities. The case study then considers how the response might have been enacted had it been guided by a CFEC.

Gender; Health; and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Emergencies

> Social, cultural and biological factors increase the risks faced by women and particularly girls [in health crises]. Available data suggest that there is a pattern of gender differentiation in terms of exposure to and perceptions of risk, preparedness, response and physical and psychological impact, as well as the capacity to recover.[8]

Crises of public health hold an interesting position in the discourse around gender in IHA: it is a point where biological and social risk factors related to gender and sex interact.[9] Although gendered protection issues (such as SGBV) that impact on other types of humanitarian crises are also relevant here, the particular influence of sex over gender in health responses has left gender under-addressed in some cases. In short, focus in the health sector has been on the biological needs of women (particularly around reproductive health) and their children, and less on gendered social constructions and power relations (or indeed the biological health needs of men). Added to this, the dominance of the World Health Organization (WHO) in this space has ensured that clinical needs are often given priority over other crucial gendered areas

[8] Inter-Agency Standing Committee, "Women, Girls, Boys and Men: Different Needs – Equal Opportunities. Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action." 77.
[9] World Health Organization. "Gender and Health in Disasters." http://www.who.int/gender/other_health/en/genderdisasters.pdf, 10 September 2013, 1.

of health response such as addressing social barriers to receiving treatment, dealing with stigma and provision of psychosocial support.[10] For example, the midterm review of WHO's Gender Strategy notes that, while there is a strong emphasis on maternal health in WHO's Country Cooperation Strategies, discussions on specific diseases still omit considerations of gender, for the most part.[11]

The health sector broadly remains relatively conservative in its considerations of gender. Despite a preamble noting the importance of context analysis for appropriate health services provision, the Sphere Handbook, for example, fails to mention gender or gender analysis throughout the rest of its chapter on health, with the exception of a detailed discussion on both sexual and reproductive health and child health. Importantly, these do not focus on gender as a pervasive structural issue affecting all identities and organisations in individually determined ways, but rather as an issue affecting males and females in distinct but generalised ways. Outside the Sphere and IASC Gender Handbooks, attention has also tended to be directed towards maternal (and child) health, and SGBV recovery and rehabilitation – both issues that dominantly affect women, or at least are dominantly perceived to affect women, often with little male buy-in.[12] The consequences of social constructions of gender on experiences of certain diseases have largely been overlooked.

Nevertheless, the importance of gender for humanitarian health crises has been recognised. This is demonstrated, for example, by the fact that WHO – the global health cluster lead – is one of the first UN organisations to conduct a baseline gender assessment for its own

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[10] DFID. "Multilateral Aid Review: Ensuring Maximum Value for Money for UK Aid through Multilateral Organisations." https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67583/multilateral_aid_review.pdf, 10 September 2013, 206.

[11] World Health Organization. "Gender Mainstreaming in WHO: What is Next? Report of the Midterm Review of WHO Gender Strategy." WHO, http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2011/9789241502337_eng.pdf, 10 September 2013, 2.

[12] Although this remains overwhelmingly the case, there has been some recent effort to ensure men are involved in gender work. Most notably this has come in the form of male champions against violence against women. See: Francis Pickup, Suzanne Williams, and Caroline Sweetman, *Ending Violence Against Women: A Challenge for Development and Humanitarian Work* (London: Oxfam GB, 2001), 213.

operations and, further, has continued to monitor progress against this baseline in detail.[13] The IASC Guidelines contain an entire chapter on 'Gender and Health in Emergencies' outlining at least three important areas that are affected by gender and must be considered in delivering health care in crisis situations: different needs, potential barriers to accessing services, and ways to ensure equal access to services.[14] The IASC guidelines also note the importance of including gender analysis at each stage of a health project cycle and including representatives of all groups, especially the marginalised and/or vulnerable in project decision-making processes.[15] However, visibility of these insights in on-the-ground programming continues to be lacking.[16]

The story in the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector of humanitarian response is more promising. This global cluster is led by UNICEF – an organisation with a strong emphasis and past performance on ensuring gender equality and attention to structural gendered injustices in its work. As such, in the WASH sector, attention to gender has been strong relative to other clusters. A more widespread understanding of the principles of gender-sensitisation in WASH has followed, particularly in ensuring easy access to necessary facilities for women, including as a means to decrease levels of SGBV especially in contexts where displacement has occurred. Uptake and implementation of this recognition is, of course, variable, but the strong leadership of UNICEF in this area should not be underestimated. In recent multilateral assessments by both Australia and the United Kingdom (UK), UNICEF's work on gender was specifically mentioned. In the Australian report, UNICEF was also mentioned as playing a critical role in norm and agenda setting, particularly around rights agendas.[17] This strong leadership points to WASH as an area which has the potential to perform strongly across contexts on gender-sensitive programming.

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[13] World Health Organization, "Gender Mainstreaming in WHO: What is Next? Report of the Midterm Review of WHO Gender Strategy," 4.
[14] Inter-Agency Standing Committee, "Women, Girls, Boys and Men: Different Needs – Equal Opportunities. Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action." 77.
[15] Ibid.
[16] World Health Organization, "Gender Mainstreaming in WHO: What is Next? Report of the Midterm Review of WHO Gender Strategy," 16.
[17] AusAID. "Australian Multilateral Assessment." http://www.ausaid.gov.au/partner/Documents/ama-full-report.pdf, 9 September 2013, 208.

The interaction of two sectors – health and WASH – in this response is significant in understanding the way in which the response has been conceived. At a global level, cluster leads have a great impact on the way in which program issues will be prioritised. The influence of these in World Vision's response should not be over-exaggerated. However, the discussion above does highlight some existing issues around attention to gender in these sectors which may have also impacted upon activities here.

Gender in Papua New Guinea – Violence and Inequality in a Bright Spotlight

Papua New Guinea is notorious for its rates of violence against women and other gendered injustices. Gendered violence perpetuates a pervasive barrier to achieving personal safety and more widespread gender equality in other areas.[18] While there are significant challenges to data collection on rates of gendered violence in PNG, those studies that have attempted to do so identify gendered violence as a pervasive problem that maintains general acceptability in society. One report from the early 1990s, for example, found that 67% of women had been victims of spousal abuse, with the figure hitting near 100% in the highlands provinces.[19] Another suggested that at least 50% of women have suffered forced sex. Rape and murder have been connected to tribal fighting; gang activity and retribution; and sorcery accusations, as well as occurring frequently within marriage.[20] Violence is further compounded by the high risk of contracting HIV in PNG, a country where latest figures indicate that around 0.92% of the adult population is living with HIV.[21]

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[18] Treva Braun. "Stocktake of the Gender Mainstreaming Capacity of Pacific Island Governments: Papua New Guinea." Secretariat of the Pacific Island Communities, http://www.spc.int/hdp/index2.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=329&Itemid=4, 10 September 2013, 10.

[19] Laura Baines, "Gender-Based Violence in Papua New Guinea. Trends and Challenges," *Burgmann Journal* 1 (2012): 22.

[20] Office of Development Effectiveness, *Violence Against Women in Melanesia and East Timor: Building on Global and Regional Promising Responses* (Canberra: AusAID, 2008), 105.

[21] UNAIDS. "Papua New Guinea Releases New HIV Prevalence Estimates." https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2010/august/20100826fspng/, 17 September 2013.

PNG also suffers from high levels of gender inequality in other areas, from education and employment, to land rights, political representation and insecurity in domestic settings.[22] Maternal mortality rates remain high and PNG's ethnic and cultural diversity has ensured that forms of gendered inequalities vary across the country. Women possess little economic freedom, having restricted land rights and limited independent access to cash. Further, cultural practices, such as the bride price system, encourage a view that a woman is the property of her husband and therefore a second-class citizen, under her husband's control. [23] Overall, in 2013, PNG was rated 134 out of 148 in the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) gender-related development index.[24]

With this background, gender has become the focus of much development aid and particularly donor government attention in PNG. As the second largest recipient of the Australian Government's foreign aid budget,[25] programs to address gender inequalities and particularly violence against women have been high on the agenda. In addition to the Australian aid program's gender policy requirements,[26] the Government of PNG's Office of Development for Women released its own National Policy for Women and Gender Equality (2011–2015) in 2011, as well as maintaining a dedicated branch focused on gender and development within PNG's Department of Community Development.[27] Gender focal points have also been set up in several other government departments, including the Department of Health.[28] However, although awareness of gender inequalities and intent (and outside pressure) for change are apparent, resources have historically been lacking. Further, a 2011 report on the state of gender mainstreaming in the PNG Government notes that, although donor support was vital for gender mainstreaming work, PNG Government ownership of the mainstreaming agenda could not be guaranteed and required attention.[29] As such, PNG's 'gender agenda' reflects the 'dominant narrative of international development' where 'gender equality is at the heart of

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[22] For example: Katherine Lepani, "Mobility, Violence and the Gendering of HIV in Papua New Guinea," *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 19, no. 2 (2008). John Gibson and Scott Rozelle, "Is It Better to Be a Boy? A Disaggregated Outlay Equivalent Analysis of Gender Bias in Papua New Guinea," *The Journal of Development Studies* 40, no. 4 (2004).

[23] Office of Development Effectiveness, *Violence Against Women in Melanesia and East Timor: Building on Global and Regional Promising Responses*, 105.

[24] United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2013. The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World* (New York: UNDP, 2012), 158.

sustainable development',[30] yet often fails to consider other local understandings regarding gender relations or appropriate and realistic ways to address gender issues in individual communities. This is highly significant for the World Vision's humanitarian work in this context.

Before moving on to the case study to be discussed, a quick note on language is also important. Although English is now an official language of PNG, and the language of education and business, the majority of the PNG rural population does not have a strong command of the language. The term gender is thus often misunderstood, and at best translated as 'men and women' losing the references to structural power relations embedded in the English interpretation of the term. Confusion abounds regarding its meaning and intent for many people. Jane Anderson recounts in her own research with non-governmental organisation (NGO) workers in PNG, that understandings of gender ranged from issues such as:

> ... female priests to violence against women, to basically removing the biological need for men at all ... A lot of people thought it was around changing people's roles and making men do women's tasks and giving all the good stuff to women and leaving nothing for the men, and even women thought that and weren't happy about it ...[31]

As a result, uptake and understanding of the term gender in local communities can vary and this should be kept in mind in the following case analysis. Local ownership of gender initiatives is often poor and viewed as foreign, while efforts to improve the status of women (for example, programs targeting violence against women) are more easily accepted.[32]

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[25] AusAID. "Summary of Australia's Overseas Aid Program 2012-13. Budget Highlights." http://www.ausaid.gov.au/Budgets/Documents/budget-highlights-2012-13.pdf, 10 September 2013.
[26] These are outlined in AusAID's thematic strategy. ———, "Promoting Opportunities for All: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment."
[27] Braun, "Stocktake of the Gender Mainstreaming Capacity of Pacific Island Governments: Papua New Guinea," 12.
[28] Ibid., 14.
[29] Ibid., 17.
[30] Jane Anderson, "'Life in All Its Fullness': Translating Gender in the Papua New Guinea Church Partnership Program," *SSGM Discussion Paper*, no. 7 (2012), http://ips.cap.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/2012_7.pdf, 12 January 2013.
[31] Interview with NGO Church Partnership Program Coordinator, March 2011 in ibid., 6.
[32] World Vision PNG Humanitarian Emergency Affairs Operations Manager, Interview with Author, Madang, 8 March 2012.

Case Study Background and Method

World Vision's Madang cholera response focused on improving access to safe water and was designed to complement the assistance already provided by the Madang Provincial Health Department and other aid organisations working in Madang at the time of the outbreak.[33] Valued at a total cost of USD 26,528, the response focused on three main outputs: establishing WASH management committees, construction and demonstration of ventilated improved pit latrines, and the development of a rainwater catchment system in combination with the purification of several water points. Prior assistance had concentrated on awareness raising; distribution of educational materials and non-food items such as water purification tablets and jerry cans; and, of course, clinical care.[34]

This chapter is based on field research conducted in February and March 2012 in Port Moresby, Madang town and Sisiak settlement. The empirical core of the research consisted of semi-structured interviews with NGO (including World Vision) and UN staff working on the response to the cholera outbreak (both nationally and in Madang), representatives of the Madang Provincial Health Department and residents of the Humade area of Sisiak settlement. Of the fifteen participants in the study, five were community members, and ten were NGO and UN staff members, representing five humanitarian agencies with differing roles and mandates in the national and provincial response. Interviews were semi-structured, lasted up to two hours and were conducted in either English or Tok Pisin (with the assistance of a translator) on the request of the interviewee. Participants were asked to share their experiences and views on how gender affected relief and recovery needs during the cholera outbreak and how it was (or was not) considered relevant to the response framework of their own situation or organisation (if applicable) and others with whom they had contact. Further, participants were invited to discuss their understandings of 'gender', 'gender equality' and 'feminism' in relation to humanitarian and social justice programming both in the cholera response and more broadly. It is important to state clearly that this case study does not seek to assess the

[33] World Vision Pacific Development Group, *End of Project Report: Madang Cholera Response* 2010 (unpublished), 6.

[34] World Vision staff members were involved in the provision of some of these programs but were not the funding body.

effectiveness or appropriateness of World Vision's response to the cholera outbreak in Madang; but rather, only to analyse and suggest reasons for divergences in understandings of gender in policy and its implementation in programming and practice. This is an important distinction to make and in doing so I recognise the often competing incentives for and values of aid workers, international institutions and donors, and aid recipients in any given humanitarian context. This discordance is especially apparent in discussions of politically and culturally laden concepts such as gender. As such, the chapter does not endeavour to speak for residents of affected areas or represent their views as to the utility of World Vision's program. Interview findings are supported by analysis of primary and secondary written sources. This includes, importantly, analysis of internal policy documents and project designs and evaluations that are not readily available to the public and were provided to me by staff members. These written sources assist in providing a fuller picture of the way gender is understood and implemented across the agency.

Policy, Program and Practice: World Vision's (Gender) Response to Cholera in Madang

> World Vision attempts to include a gender lens in all projects by prioritizing increased access to basic health care services, increased access to education, reduced harmful traditional practices, strengthened relationships between men and women, and increased economic development opportunities.[35]
>
> –World Vision's Approach: Gender Integration. World Vision International website

> The project in its activities will address cross-cutting themes, including child protection, gender equality, environment, disability and peace-building. Staff will also be trained in these principles as well as the need to be aware of these cross-cutting issues.[36]
>
> –Madang Cholera Response Concept Paper

> When we went up to distribute these items, it was just general distribution to households, it was not like, we see the needs of women and the needs of men. So women they want this or that, but it's not provided directly like what they needed, so it's just general things that we've given out ... When we went out, women did not come out to us, it was the men

[35] World Vision International. "World Vision's Approach: Gender Integration." http://www.worldvision.org/content.nsf/learn/ways-we-help-gender, 30 November 2012.
[36] World Vision Pacific Development Group, *Project Concept Paper: Madang Cholera Response*, 4.

that came out and said, you know, my family, they are affected, we need this or we need that. So we have to distribute according to what they need.[37]

–World Vision staff member, Madang

The three passages above reflect the journey of gender from policy concept, to program consideration, to practical reality. The divergence between conceptualisations/understandings of gender on the website and in the concept paper and the perceived relevance and applicability of these for staff members implementing the program is apparent. In the section to follow, this divergence is elaborated upon, with focus on two issues: the apparent lack of conceptual clarity around gender, and the absence of any sustained gender analysis prior to, or during, the response.

Firstly, throughout discussions with research participants, there was an apparent lack of clarity around the concept of gender and an inconsistent appreciation of its importance at different levels of the organisation. Despite both the concept document and interviewees indicating that gender training was compulsory for all World Vision employees, not all staff had received the training and of those that had in Madang, few could recall more than a very vague and basic definition of gender. None of those interviewed in Madang could express what World Vision's policy on gender was or the process for implementing it. Most deferred to either the 'gender specialist' at headquarters in Port Moresby or the World Vision website to explain it. Understandings of the relevance and priority of gender programming both within the Madang office and particularly between the Madang and Port Moresby offices varied significantly – with those at headquarters in Port Moresby having a much more sophisticated theoretical and policy understanding. Particularly interesting was that those who seemed to have a stronger understanding of the concept of gender, at least in terms of accepted discourse, were most distant from implementation on the ground. Staff involved in implementation were also among those who considered gender least relevant. When asked, for example, whether they

[37] World Vision Madang Administrative Officer, Interview with Author, Madang, 8 March 2012.

considered the cross-cutting issues to have been implemented effectively, one staff member responded:

> No, not really. We have more concentrated on water and sanitation and not so much on integrating the cross-cutting issues.[38]

And when asked why the paragraph on cross-cutting issues was included:

> This is something that our donors they have to see that they are happy with the cross-cutting issues. We must be seen to be integrating those issues. That is important. If they don't see that, they won't give you money.[39]

Both statements indicate a distinct lack of appreciation for the contribution a gender lens might make, in addition to a lack of ownership of gender work.

Secondly, linked to this, there was a conspicuous absence of any type of gender analysis prior to commencing programming, despite acknowledgement by staff that the cholera outbreak had gendered effects:

> Cholera also had a huge stigma attached to it, and there is ... I mean ... Gender is always an issue. In a situation like this where there is also a stigma being attached, the gender issue is made even much more serious.[40]

As a result, women were assumed to be automatically vulnerable and weak. It was assumed that they would be best protected and represented by their (usually male) heads of households. Community consultation on needs, for example, focused on male community leaders and was often conducted in committee settings where the representation and voice of less dominant groups was low. As one female resident of Sisiak expressed: 'For mothers, they cannot stand up and speak up because they will not be listened to ...'[41]

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[38] Humanitarian Emergency Affairs Operations Manager, "Interview with Author."
[39] Ibid.
[40] Humanitarian Emergency Affairs Manager, "Interview with Author."
[41] Female aid recipient 2, Interview with Author.

Women's vulnerability and weakness was taken as given, even insofar as to argue that their lack of knowledge may be responsible for the transmission of the disease. When asked why women were considered to be the most vulnerable, one staff member responded:

> In disaster, it's known worldwide that women and children are more vulnerable. It's known worldwide. So, it's common sense. In disaster, it's just common knowledge ... Yes, it's just assumed that they are. Of course they are.[42]

Significantly, this response indicates a reliance on pre-established notions of gender, gender relations, roles and vulnerability. It highlights both an inability to understand the characteristics and dynamics of gender relations in the particular crisis situation and how these may impact on gendered insecurities and inability to listen, inclusively, to the voices of recipient communities. The response signifies a divergence from growing appreciations of the intersectionality of gendered identity within the humanitarian sphere and its importance for ethical relief provision. Further, it ensures the oft-lamented conflation of gender issues with women's issues in international aid provision.[43] This divergence is particularly striking when compared with the following passage extracted from the Sphere Handbook's Minimum Standards in Health Action – a chapter of the handbook which World Vision had a significant role in developing:

> It is important to understand that to be young or old, a woman, or a person with a disability or HIV does not, of itself, make a person vulnerable or at increased risk. Rather it is the interplay of factors that does so ... a vulnerability and capacity analysis helps to ensure that a disaster response effort supports those who have a right to assistance in a non-discriminatory manner and who need it most. This requires a thorough understanding of the local context and of how a particular disaster impacts on particular groups of people in different ways due to their pre-existing vulnerabilities (e.g. being poor or discriminated against), their exposure to various protection threats (e.g. gender-based violence including sexual exploitation), disease incidence or prevalence (e.g. HIV or tuberculosis) and possibilities of epidemics (e.g. measles or cholera). Disasters can make pre-existing inequalities worse. However, support for people's coping strategies, resilience and recovery capacities is essential. Their knowledge, skills and strategies need to be supported

[42] Humanitarian Emergency Affairs Operations Manager, "Interview with Author."
[43] Andrea Cornwall, "Whose Voices? Whose Choices? Reflections on Gender and Participatory Development," *World Development* 31, no. 8 (2003): 1329.

> and their access to social, legal, financial and psychosocial support advocated for. The various physical, cultural, economic and social barriers they may face in accessing these services in an equitable manner also need to be addressed.[44]

Within World Vision's response to cholera in Madang, the evidence provided above suggests a strong divergence between gender policy ideas, programming commitments and implementation realities. The question then becomes why.

Implementing Organisation: Child-focused, Christian and Transformative – World Vision in the International Humanitarian System

> Just as Jesus treated women as equals in a day when women were regarded as second-class citizens, we also treat female and male as equal. Just as Jesus ate and drank with outcasts and the poor in a day when to be poor was an unmistakeable sign of God's displeasure, we likewise seek to show compassion for the poor because God does. And just as Jesus showed a special regard for children in a day when children were not regarded as important, so we, as a Christian child-focused organisation, seek to show a special regard for children in their suffering.[45]

The history and foundational principles of a humanitarian organisation guides the way in which concepts such as gender are presented to staff and implemented. World Vision is no exception. As a Christian and child-focused organisation, World Vision draws from biblical references and stories of Christ's compassion to demonstrate the value of a gender focus in aid provision.[46] World Vision's Christian identity combined with its foundational work as a child sponsorship agency (an agenda often associated with other social justice issues such as women's rights) has ensured that mainstream conceptualisations of gender policy are highly compatible with its work. As a participant from World Vision based in Port Moresby expressed:

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[44] The Sphere Project, *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response*, 294-5.
[45] World Vision Australia. "World Vision Australia – Our Christian Identity Statement 2 – Exercising the Compassion of Christ." https://www.worldvision.com.au/Libraries/OurChristianIdentity/WVA_OCI_Compassion_of_Christ.sflb.ashx, 20 November 2012.
[46] Linda Tripp, "Gender and Development from a Christian Perspective: Experience from World Vision," *Gender and Development* 7, no. 1 (1999): 65.

> In my trainings what I do is I take examples, whenever I get opportunities to, especially if it is gender, I take a lot of examples from the scriptures ... Jesus, the way he addressed women at that time was just simply amazing. So if we use the line that our mission is to follow Jesus Christ, if we read the bible and all of that, gender is all the way through it.[47]

This background suggests that World Vision could be ideally positioned to promote gender awareness and execute gender-sensitive policy and programming. However, this is somewhat compromised by the impact of World Vision's Christian identity on its aid policies and practices. As a Christian organisation, World Vision embraces a conservative and traditional understanding of gendered social relations. This is seen in such forums as World Vision's stance on family planning support[48] and its ambiguous position on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual and intersex (LGBTI) rights. Such a framing encourages a liberal understanding of gender justice, focused on equal rights, but is stifled through the lens of traditional Christian values.

This vision is also affected by the conflicted position humanitarian assistance currently holds in 'aidland'.[49] In addition to its Christian lens and child-focused history, World Vision explicitly identifies itself as a promoter of human transformation and justice as outlined in their mission statement.[50] As discussed in *Chapter Two*, to act in the humanitarian space, organisations must negotiate their place amongst competing understandings of legitimate humanitarianism. World Vision's Christian identity and transformative agenda combine to make this negotiation less difficult than for other organisations providing emergency response. Relying on scripture to guide gender policy and programming allows World Vision to continue to use the language of impartiality and neutrality, while attempting to execute a transformative agenda that is in

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[47] Humanitarian Emergency Affairs Manager, "Interview with Author."
[48] Nigel Marsh. "A, B + C Puts World Vision at the Front of the Prevention Discussion." http://www.worldvision.org/worldvision/pr.nsf/stable/barcelona_6, 30 November 2012.
[49] David Mosse, ed. *Adventures in Aidland: The Anthropology of Professionals in International Development* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011).
[50] World Vision International. "Our Mission." http://www.worldvision.org/content.nsf/about/our-mission, 30 November 2012.

line with the teachings of the bible. This approach is compatible with the context in PNG – a country where 96% of citizens self-identify as Christian.[51]

It is important to note that this may not aim for the same depth or breadth of transformation of gender structures attempted by other secular organisations. In World Vision International's gender training toolkit,[52] objectives of human transformation are included alongside a definition of gender diversity that reflects complementarity but difference:

> The diversity between men and women is expressed biologically, emotionally and psychologically. However, these differences do not presuppose or imply superiority or inferiority.[53]

This approach does not necessarily require a complete transformation of gendered power relations. Rather, in the context of humanitarian assistance, it allows World Vision to address gendered needs and address apparent harmful gendered practices without necessarily imposing ideas that go beyond traditional scripture-informed ideas of gender roles.

In the context of Madang, it is also significant that World Vision has ongoing development operations in the area. This lessened the extent to which humanitarian principles were emphasised and increased the perception within the community that the cholera response would be linked to longer term development programming. World Vision was already very familiar with the operating context and several local staff members had lived in Madang all their lives, with several having direct family connections with residents of Sisiak settlement. These factors contributed to the alleviation of the power of the discourse associated with the traditional humanitarian principles.

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[51] Human Rights and Labor Bureau of Democracy. "International Religious Freedom Report 2003: Papua New Guinea." http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2003/24317.htm, 17 September 2013.
[52] World Vision International's gender training toolkit is available here: http://www.wvi.org/gender/publication/gender-training-toolkit-english-version
[53] World Vision International, *Gender Training Toolkit* (Monrovia: World Vision International, 2008), 56.

Response Context: Outsiders Inside and Insiders Outside – The Interactions of Global Policy Frameworks with Local Realities

Local culture and context play a defining role in the conceptualisation and implementation of international humanitarian policy. This is most dramatically seen where humanitarian organisations form part of a global consortium and operate in crisis settings in partnership with international and local staff. This is certainly the case in Madang, and specifically in Sisiak, where population flow has resulted in the coming together of previously geographically divided and culturally distinct groups. The position of World Vision as a global organisation shapes World Vision's interaction with local societies in distinct ways. Comments by participants in this study suggest multi-layered difficulties in these interactions. First, some international staff display difficulties in understanding and engaging meaningfully (with transformative intent) with the local gendered context, culture, politics and power relations.[54] This is particularly true insofar as it requires moving past staff members' pre-existing conceptions of gendered relations within the country. For example, staff were able to identify that distribution methods needed to be managed to ensure that relief goods reached all members of the community. However, there was little consideration of the possibility and desirability of behaviour change to ensure this equal distribution. Rather, women and men were simply approached separately where there was suspicion of abuse of the distribution system, thereby leaving gender hierarchies intact.

Second, interviews with participants, particularly World Vision national staff, suggest discordance between World Vision's ideas and expectations about gender, and what is possible on the ground. As a global consortium with the backing (and funding contributions) of international donors, World Vision exacts significant power and influence over the (less influential) states in which it works – including PNG. As such, for local staff it is difficult to question the suitability of World Vision's global policy frameworks (and those of comparable organisations) for the PNG context. Similarly, the legitimacy of an international organisation intervening in issues of social justice is not easily questioned. This is not to say that World

[54] To use Sally Engle Merry's terminology, staff display difficulty in speaking about gender in IHA in the 'vernacular'. Sally Engle Merry, *Human Rights & Gender Violence: Translating International Law into Local Justice* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 218-19.

Vision's policies are immune to internal debate or that such programs should be eliminated. Rather, the ability of PNG as a sovereign but impoverished nation to question the priorities of international aid agencies is limited. This comment refers not only to the PNG Government's ability to refuse international frameworks, but also to local–global internal organisational interactions. For locally engaged, usually short-term staff members, such as those implementing World Vision's cholera response in Madang, to overtly refuse policy directives from headquarters (whether national, regional or global) is inherently difficult.

This power imbalance perpetuates a lack of local ownership of gender policies and programs. With prevailing ideas about gender formed at the international level, international staff understand that a tokenistic engagement with context will fulfil organisational requirements.[55] At the same time, local staff (and aid recipients) often display a resistance to considering the gendered impacts of disaster through a framework perceived as foreign. As demonstrated below, gender is perceived as something that is often against local PNG norms and therefore resisted by communities. Because of its imposition from the outside and without effective translators for the concept, ideas are often misunderstood.

> A: Would you say there's resistance when you talk about gender in the community?
>
> B: Yeah, definitely. Amongst staff and even in the community and the health department ... some people they don't understand what gender is. This is a big issue – people don't understand.[56]

Emergency Type: Disease – A Socially Indiscriminate Disaster?

> There are always issues. There are all kinds of issues. So we are trying to address all these issues, we will not get the response right. In cholera this meant saving the affected as fast as possible because there are many other issues also and if you start to look at all of them, someone is lost in the process.[57]

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[55] Michelle Thomas and Clare Seddon, "Poverty is a Woman's Face: Lessons for Gender Programming in Africa," in *Annual Program Review 2010*, ed. World Vision Australia (Melbourne: World Vision Australia, 2011), 6.

[56] Humanitarian Emergency Affairs Operations Manager, "Interview with Author."

[57] Humanitarian Emergency Affairs Manager, "Interview with Author."

> Some of these cross-cutting issues such as protection and gender didn't come out [in the response] for a while or very well. And I've said in many of the coordination meetings, discussions on those areas also sometimes you don't find them, on the agenda at all. I would say most of the time you will not find this ... most of the INGOs [international non-governmental organisations] and the Red Cross and donors are aware of this issue seeing how prevalent it is in Papua New Guinea but I think at the time the focus was more on getting the clinical activities going and putting a stop on the spread of cholera.[58]

The urgency of curtailing the spread of cholera was a frequently recurring theme in discussions with participants regarding the relevance of gender to World Vision's cholera response – and the national response more broadly. The 'emergency excuse' – where gender analysis and mainstreaming work is delayed until such a time as 'real' emergency needs have been dealt with – has been documented by other authors and discussed above.[59] Gender may then be deprioritised as a time-consuming optional extra to consider when time or funding allows for such luxuries.[60] Where a relief program's success is framed as dependent on a culture of speed, in-depth contextual analysis (including gender analysis) is not considered appropriate or possible. Aid providers have argued that survival is not dependent on being gender sensitive.[61]

Such general commentary is consistent with the findings of this research, but with two notable particularities. First, the lack of gender analysis and generally tokenistic attempts to include gender awareness in both program design and implementation reflected the sentiment amongst staff that women were inherently vulnerable to disaster. This allowed for a general willingness to act *for* women and an unaddressed ignorance regarding the way in which gendered power relations may impact the situation. Second, the nature of a health emergency was utilised to demonstrate the lack of necessity (or possibility) of gender analysis in this response. Significantly, and in contradiction with previously expressed sentiments regarding women's inherent vulnerability in disaster, participants emphasised that as there had been no disruption to social order (for example, through displacement), the level of safety women

[58] UNOCHA PNG Humanitarian Affairs Analyst, Interview with Author, Port Moresby, 2 March 2012.

experienced in their community remained unchanged. This is despite the well-documented high levels of gender-based violence reported throughout PNG.

> Different disasters will have different volumes of response and the approach will be different. In this case, the women affected were in a stable home – their homes were not affected. They were in a stable home in a safe environment. But when you look at cyclone or earthquake or tsunami, their homes are destroyed – that makes women more vulnerable. And given the disaster setting – with cholera, it is safe for woman because they are in their own homes, whereas with the cyclone and the earthquake they are not. The considerations would be different ... we decided it was safe for women and children and in their home – they are not being displaced so we didn't do a gender analysis because they are safe in their homes, but if they are displaced, then we look at how gender relations have changed and problems and how we have to respond to that.[62]

Applying a Critical Feminist Ethics of Care in Papua New Guinea

Reshaping World Vision's cholera response to align with a CFEC, may have offered a more productive way to engage with this context. The ingrained gender inequalities and violence that exist in PNG ensure that finding an appropriate way to engage with gender issues is essential for any humanitarian work in this setting. It is also essential that any approach to gender elicits local ownership, by engaging with existing societal structures rather than dismissing them as negative. At the same time the subjectivity of experience, vulnerability and capacity must be recognised. A CFEC is capable of providing a framework in which this may be achieved and is able to be shaped to fit well with World Vision's faith-based approach and focus on family and children. Again, two focus areas are of particular importance: relationships of care, and relationships of power.

First and foremost, attention to *relationships of care* in this setting may have allowed programming to move past tokenistic engagement to attending to subjective needs. In this

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[59] See: Hyndman and de Alwis, "Beyond Gender: Towards a Feminist Analysis of Humanitarianism and Development in Sri Lanka," 212-26.
[60] Stamnes, *The Responsibility to Protect: Integrating Gender Perspectives into Policies and Practices*, 18.
[61] Hyndman and de Alwis, "Beyond Gender: Towards a Feminist Analysis of Humanitarianism and Development in Sri Lanka," 214.
[62] Humanitarian Emergency Affairs Operations Manager, "Interview with Author."

context, focusing on the caring relationships between mothers and their children, within families and in the community more broadly would have enabled aid agencies to more easily identify the individuals that treatment and awareness messages were not reaching. Attention to relationships of care would have also identified the strong contribution that many women were making in both disseminating information about cholera and ensuring that their families, and particularly children, were following necessary hygiene practices. As such, in contrast to the view that all women are inherently vulnerable, focusing on relationships of care may have pointed to an opportunity for women to play an important role in preventing the spread of cholera in Madang. At the same time, it would have revealed that community members who worked in Madang town (mostly men) were sometimes missed in the dissemination of information, as they were absent from the community during working hours. As such, they may be more susceptible to contracting the disease. Relationships of care are also important for understanding access to treatment, should an individual become infected. For instance, those with caring responsibilities, unable to enlist the help of others to share this burden, may be less likely to be able to travel to receive health care. If relationships of care were attended to, such issues would be more obvious to programmers and receive the attention required.

Attending to *relationships of power* may also have been beneficial in this context. Noting the embedded unequal gender power structures of PNG, it is essential that humanitarian aid providers understand the particular expression of these dynamics in Sisiak settlement during the cholera outbreak. This includes, for example, issues around stigma and perceived blame for the disease which were not fully explored. Understanding *relationships of power* is also particularly significant in this context, and may assist in ensuring that ideas about gender (and if a CFEC was to be employed, relationships of care and power) are accepted and addressed by recipient communities and local aid workers. Where unequal relationships of power prevent this, these could be examined and reformed into a more productive engagement. This may have allowed a greater local ownership and promotion of gender-sensitivity approaches in this context.

Concluding Comments

> In another response, yes, we may think about gender in another response, but in the cholera, you know, I didn't see that happen. So I see a role for future debates and insights into how we can do this better or where we can do this better ... And also, there's something else I want to share. Just because we do something good here, doesn't mean to say we do the same thing good in all the other areas, because the context is also different. We look at the context of each. We're talking about change here, we're talking about beliefs, we're talking about things that are ingrained into people and we want for the people to challenge themselves. It's a huge task. So how do we get that to happen?[63]

The above reflection by a World Vision staff member based in Port Moresby summarises the challenges of understanding and implementing gender policy in humanitarian settings. In a world where humanitarian emergencies present diverse challenges, in disparate geographical settings, international policy frameworks are unlikely to be enacted analogously by the assortment of agencies operating in the global humanitarian space. In this context, the value, credibility and practicality of adhering to global standards is easy to question.

In an area where gender has no direct translation into the local language,[64] the expectation that local understandings will converge with global definitions seems illogical for local aid staff, let alone for their beneficiaries. In my discussions with staff and recipients in Madang, it quickly became clear that there was discomfort with the concept. In practice, gender was perceived to refer to differences in needs between men and women with little attention to the negotiation of gendered power relations and the impact this had upon the emergency. It was considered a foreign concept that was, although useful, not naturally well-suited to work within traditional PNG social structures. Given this, it is difficult to see the relevance of a singular understanding and policy directive on this issue.

This chapter has argued that three major factors – implementing organisation, response context and emergency type – affected the way in which gender was conceptualised and

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[63] Humanitarian Emergency Affairs Manager, "Interview with Author."

[64] Although PNG has three official languages – English, Tok Pisin and Hiri Motu – Tok Pisin is the most widely spoken and understood. English is spoken by 1–2%.

implemented in World Vision's Madang cholera response. Together, they generated a strong divergence between the aspirations of policy and the realities of practice in Madang. With each factor so strongly dependent upon the local context, it becomes clear that the international approach to gender needs to be reframed in a more locally relevant and easily adaptable way.[65] While gender policy and practice is based on preconceived understandings and formulations of what 'doing gender' means, it is difficult to see the change referred to above being realisable. This finding is consistent with other comparable studies of gender policy and programming in humanitarian assistance.[66] Indeed, in recent years, the policy nuances of particular humanitarian agencies on global gender standards have reflected a growing recognition that aid programming (including its gender components) must be informed by the specificities of the given context and designed in consultation with aid recipients. A shift in theory to a CFEC would allow this more readily.

[65] For instance, through the process of 'hybrid vernacularisation', discussed by Sally Engle Merry in the context of Human Rights. Sally Engle Merry, "Transnational Human Rights and Local Activism: Mapping the Middle," *American Anthropologist* 1 (2006).

[66] See, for example: Fenella Porter and Caroline Sweetman, "Editorial," in *Mainstreaming Gender in Development: A Critical Review*, eds. Fenella Porter and Caroline Sweetman (Oxford: Oxfam GB, 2005).

Chapter Five:
Disaster –
The Red Cross Red Crescent Movement Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami

> For many organisations, it's the first time for them working in Japan. Many of them are mainly working overseas – in Asia. So, maybe they are gender sensitive in their projects overseas, but they don't care about gender in their projects in Japan. They are not really sensitive ... My assumption is that they think that the place of women in Japan is already OK – they don't have problems at all. But the situation in Tokyo is different from Tohoku – they are more traditional and conservative. So these NGOs are mostly from the city and not only Tokyo, but also Kobe and Kyoto – so big cities, so maybe their perception is different from people in Tohoku.[1]

On 11 March 2011, communities living on Japan's northeast coast suffered a complex natural disaster unparalleled in Japan's living memory – the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami (GEJET).[2] Frequently now referred to simply as '3/11', the triple catastrophe of earthquake, tsunami and nuclear accident occupies a place in Japanese consciousness that will remain prominent for generations to come. The relief and recovery needs following the disaster were daunting. By 25 April 2012 – over a year after the disaster, the number of confirmed fatalities stood at 15,237, with 3,057 still missing.[3] More than 344,000 people remain displaced in affected regions, with the total financial cost of the disaster being estimated at between USD 210 and 300 billion, around double that of Hurricane Katrina in 2005.[4] Hundreds of government bodies, NGOs, non-profit organisations (NPOs), civil society organisations and private organisations, both from within Japan and abroad, rushed to provide financial and operational support. Amongst this outpouring of support, the Japanese Red Cross Society (JRCS) launched a large-scale funding appeal and operational response.[5] As of 31 March 2012,

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[1] Program Coordinator Church World Service Japan, Interview with Author, Tokyo, 12 April 2012.
[2] The Great East Japan Earthquake of March 2011 is the most powerful earthquake to be recorded in Japan since 1900, when modern record-keeping systems were established. Jeff Kingston, "Introduction," in *Natural Disaster and Nuclear Crisis in Japan. Response and Recovery after Japan's 3/11*, ed. Jeff Kingston (London: Routledge, 2012).
[3] Japanese Red Cross Society. "Japan: Earthquake and Tsunami: 12 Month Report." http://www.jrc.or.jp/vcms_lf/kokusai270412_12MonthReport.pdf, 30 April 2012.
[4] Kingston, "Introduction," 2.
[5] Japanese Red Cross Society, "Japan: Earthquake and Tsunami: 12 Month Report," 5.

the JRCS had received JPY 52,180,488,300 (approximately USD 662,792,794) in donations from individuals, private organisations, government donors and RCRC sister societies. It initiated a wide-ranging collection of relief activities, including emergency medical provision, distribution of emergency relief supplies, psychosocial support, nursing care, and the mobilisation of volunteers.[6] The response of the JRCS, with the support of its sister societies and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), became central to the relief effort in Japan not only due to its financial and operational capacity, but also as a result of its privileged position under Japan's national *Disaster Relief Act* where it is a 'Designated Public Corporation' with a mandate to 'cooperate with the government to offer relief assistance.'[7]

With over two years having passed at the time of writing, Japan and the international community continue to commemorate and reflect on the disaster. With this commemoration has come the production of numerous progress reports, evaluations and early lessons learned documents as the national and international humanitarian community begins to assess the relief effort and its implications for future programming.[8] The JRCS, supported by the IFRC, has followed this trend releasing both a 12-month progress report and an extensive evaluation comparing the lessons learned in the GEJET response with other disaster responses in high-income countries in early 2012.[9] As with most progress reports and evaluations in other disaster situations globally, the documents include details of the response activities so far, reflections on challenging areas and success stories and a series of recommendations for future work by the JRCS and others both in Japan and abroad. However, unlike most comparable documents, particularly those reporting on relief efforts in developing countries, there is no mention of gender policy or programming. Reference to gender awareness and

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[6] Ibid.

[7] For more information, see: ———. "Domestic Disaster Response." http://www.jrc.or.jp/english/activity/disaster.html, 30 April 2012. An English translation of the Disaster Relief Act is available at: "Disaster Relief Act (Law No. 108; October 18, 1947)." http://www.hiroi.iii.u-tokyo.ac.jp/index-genzai_no_sigoto-jakusha-kyujohoE.htm, 5 May 2012.

[8] See, for example: Gillian Yeoh. "Lessons Learned: The 2011 Disasters in Tohoku, Japan." http://give2asia.org/documents/Give2Asia-JapanTsunami-LessonsLearned.pdf, 30 April 2012.

[9] See: Jerry Talbot, Chris Staines, and Miki Wada, "Evaluation: Preparing for and Responding to Large Scale Disasters in High Income Countries. Report: Findings and Lessons Learned from the Japanese Red Cross Society's Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. Comparisons with Experiences in Other Countries. Recommendations" (IFRC/JRCS, 13 February 2012).

sensitivity in programming is likewise absent from earlier public documents released by the JRCS/IFRC detailing the activities and framework for the response.[10] The absence of discourse and policy on gender in the JRCS response indicates a divergence from established 'best practice' of the international humanitarian community and a break with international standards and norms.

This chapter examines the way in which gender has been treated in the humanitarian response to the GEJET. However, unlike the other case studies examined for this thesis, which focus on the way gender was conceptualised and implemented in the given context, the focus for this chapter is on why gender was *not* a focus for this response. This follows my finding that gender was not considered a priority in the JRCS response to the 2011 GEJET.[11] Drawing on interviews conducted in April 2012 with relief organisation representatives and individuals involved in the response to the GEJET — including from the JRCS, IFRC and the International Committee of the Red Cross — the chapter discusses the interconnected contextual issues that may have contributed to why, against the accepted frameworks of the international humanitarian community, the JRCS work has not integrated gender awareness in an overt way in discourse, policy or programming.[12] This chapter begins with a general analysis of the state of gender work in multi-sectoral disaster responses (with particular focus on crises in the developed world), and then examines the status of gender relations in Japan. The chapter then argues that three issues are particularly relevant in understanding why gender has not been a priority in the JRCS response. The first issue that is addressed is the organisational identity of the JRCS (and its affiliates). Here it is argued that its mandate is particularly prominent in organisational consciousness and impacts upon policy formulation, including the inclusion of political concepts such as gender. Second, existing social and cultural norms appear to have affected

[10] The JRCS has released regular updates on the response in English. None make mention of 'gender'. See: Japanese Red Cross Society. "Operations Updates." http://www.jrc.or.jp/eq-japan2011/operations-update/index.html, 30 May 2012.

[11] The fact that gender was not considered to be a focus issue for the JRCS was mentioned to me many times by various staff at the JRCS in the lead-up to my visit to Japan in early 2012. Prior to commencing interviewing JRCS staff members, I was advised that the JRCS would be unable to provide answers to any gender-specific questions during my interviews with them.

[12] Note that the arguments to be made here may be equally applicable to other relief organisations working on the GEJET response. The JRCS is not anomalous in its position and, indeed, the absence of gender sensitivity in programming is absent in most major humanitarian providers in the GEJET response.

the response; hence, the context of Tohoku[13] and Japan more broadly are examined. The JRCS's status as a national Red Cross society is also considered. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the chapter examines Japan's position within the international community, and the acknowledgement of its existence as a developed country, which elicited a more restrained involvement of the international relief community than is often apparent in disaster responses in developing countries. As such, international pressure from RCRC Movement partners and the international aid community more broadly was less prominent. The chapter then provides an analysis of how gender issues might be incorporated into the JRCS's work in ways which are suitable to the Japanese context, using a CFEC.

Gender in Disaster: 'Pure' Crises from the Developing to the Developed World

> ... natural disasters represent consensual parentheses in the flow of history, privileged moments in which solidarity is displayed, inequality is erased, and conflict suspended ... The fact that these are fleeting moments, and that the reality of inequality and conflict quickly reasserts itself, only underlines the moral and political exception that these events represent.[14]

As an often all-encompassing crisis, it is difficult to make generalisations about the state of gender policy and programming in disaster responses. A natural disaster response involves many sectors, from WASH and health to food security, shelter management and protection – often with many different cluster leads and priorities, and different approaches to issues such as gender. Overwhelmingly, however, natural disaster relief is considered to be one of the 'purest' areas of humanitarian response at the discursive level by the humanitarian community. Represented as beyond human control and thus indiscriminate and supposedly impartial in their effects on affected populations, natural disasters hold great power in eliciting empathetic global responses.[15] At the same time, they are seen to temporarily remove societal structures, inequalities and discrimination, in a way that encourages an understanding of singular (group) victimhood. As in Fassin's words above, natural disasters serve to create a

[13] Tohoku is the name of the region most affected by the GEJET in the north of Japan's Honshu Island.
[14] Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present*, 182.
[15] Ibid., 181.

fleeting moment of moral and political exception. As Fassin also points out, the realities of inequality quickly reassert themselves, with occasional cover from a prevailing discourse of the 'indiscriminate disaster'. The realities that follow, of course, vary from disaster to disaster, but a few main points are important to the discussion of this chapter.

The supposedly indiscriminate character of natural disasters serves discursively to mask gender and other social inequalities (for example, racial inequalities) in disaster preparedness, risk, survival and rehabilitation. In short, as natural disasters are seen to affect the population indiscriminately, gender is not considered to be a relevant variable in preparedness and response activities. This is particularly evident in disasters occurring in the developed world, where gender and development discourse is less prevalent. Hurricane Katrina provides a good example here. Researcher Joni Seager notes in her 2006 assessment of the disaster that:

> International disaster and refugee agencies have been profoundly influenced by feminist insights into the importance of the gender dynamics of disaster ... This knowledge appears to have entirely bypassed American commentators, planners and media. The "not-noticing" of the gendered dimensions of this disaster by the American media and by the panoply of experts who interpreted the disaster to the public through the media is alarming and warrants attention in itself ... American media commentators and politicians insist on referring to this as a natural disaster. There's a certain comfort and perhaps political cover in that designation, but experts eschew this term. The hurricane came ashore, but from then on it's been a human disaster all the way. The gendered character of this disaster, and the wilful silence about it, is also more artifice than nature.[16]

As Seager suggests, natural disasters are far from natural. From preparedness to survival to post-disaster coping mechanisms, research has overwhelmingly suggested that disasters serve to magnify existing insecurities and power relations rather than erasing them.[17] This importantly includes gendered power relations and inequalities at the individual, group and

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[16] Joni Seager, "Noticing Gender (or Not) in Disasters," *Geoforum* 37 (2006): 3.

[17] Philippe Le Billon and Arno Waizenegger, "Peace in the Wake of Disaster? Secessionist Conflicts and the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 32, no. 3 (2007): 411.

structural levels.[18] In Ariyabandu's words, 'Disasters are windows that showcase the prevailing gender-based inequalities in society.'[19] This often results in an increased level of insecurity for women and intensifies gendered social pressures placed on all individuals, men and women. For example, in some contexts gendered social restrictions on movement may mean that women are unable to evacuate from areas in danger of destruction. At the same time, those restricted to domestic duties or home-based work may be ill-informed about evacuation strategies, as a result of information access difficulties. Experiences of recovery too, can be highly gendered and compounded by biological needs related particularly to menstruation, childbirth and breastfeeding.[20] It is important to note here, that context is highly significant to understanding the gendered structures which impact upon disaster preparedness, survival and recovery. For example, following the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, many Sri Lankan women were required to observe the *itta* – an Islamic practice which requires 130 days of seclusion for widows after the death of their husbands, and for pregnant widows, seclusion until their children are born. This practice becomes problematic for women requiring medical assistance during pregnancy, especially where traditional assistance structures may have broken down because of death or displacement.[21] This example demonstrates the importance of gender assessments in the formulation of relief activities, as each context presents different issues.

In considering gender in disaster relief and recovery, research has also recognised a tendency to cast certain societal groups (women, children, elderly) as helpless victims.[22] This is often done while simultaneously emphasising the importance of refraining from doing so. Women and the elderly often hold important local knowledge about coping mechanisms and rehabilitation which should be appreciated and nurtured after a crisis and considered in the preparation of a relief response. As local residents and often primary household carers, women, particularly in developing countries, are often best-placed to advise on household

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[18] Oxfam. "The Tsunami's Impact on Women." http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/women.pdf, 10 September 2013, 1.

[19] M. M. Ariyabandu, "Sex, Gender and Gender Relations in Disasters," in *Women, Gender and Disaster: Global Issues and Initiatives*, eds. E. Enarson and P. G. Dhar Chakrabarti (New Delhi: SAGE, 2009), 11.

[20] Ibid., 10.

[21] Fionnuala Ni Aolain, "Women, Vulnerability and Humanitarian Emergencies," *Michigan Journal of Gender and Law* 18, no. 1 (2011-12): 13.

[22] Elaine Enarson and Lourdes Meyreles, "International Perspectives on Gender and Disaster: Differences and Possibilities," *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 14, no. 10 (2004): 50.

needs and the appropriateness of reconstruction plans.[23] Often, assumptions of vulnerability lead to relief operations becoming, in Ni Aolain's words, a 'conversation between local men and imported men [that] inherently involves the regulation of women's lives.'[24] To avoid this, gender assessments and consultations with diverse members of an affected community are required before embarking on complex relief and rebuilding programs.

Gender Relations in Japan and Japanese Perspectives on Gender Relations Abroad

> Unravelling sexual violence in Japan has been a formidable fight. Until ten years ago, there was no term for, no information or data on, violence against women in Japan. Global norms on violence against women might provide the readily available discourse, definition, and blueprint for action, but they are hard to apply if the problem is said not to exist.[25]

Japan provides a unique site for analysis of gender dynamics in the developed world. Although one of the most technologically advanced countries in the world, social equality, and notably gender equality, has not always followed. On the international stage, Japan is not known for strong positions on human rights protection[26] and domestically, participants in this study noted Japan's continuing gendered disparity in employment opportunities and achievements, despite a highly educated female population. One participant mused that 'We probably have the most highly educated housewives in the world in Japan.'[27] Since 1994 and the release of the Government of Japan's policy document, Vision of Gender Equality, there has been some progress in the institutionalisation of gender equality practices.[28] However, practical inequality persists, with women customarily still having the full burden of care for children and the elderly[29] and unable to secure employment with viable career trajectories – overwhelmingly

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[23] Ariyabandu, "Sex, Gender and Gender Relations in Disasters," 7.
[24] Ni Aolain, "Women, Vulnerability and Humanitarian Emergencies," 18.
[25] Jennifer Chan-Tiberghien, *Gender and Human Rights Politics in Japan: Global Norms and Domestic Networks* (Stanford: Standord University Press, 2004), 53.
[26] The Japanese Government's position on minority rights within Japan is particularly conservative. See: ibid., 3.
[27] Independent NGO Consultant, Interview with Author, Tokyo, 13 April 2012.
[28] Chan-Tiberghien, *Gender and Human Rights Politics in Japan: Global Norms and Domestic Networks*, 42.
[29] Marcus Rebick and Ayumi Takenaka, "The Changing Japanese Family," in *The Changing Japanese Family*, eds. Marcus Rebick and Ayumi Takenaka (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 8-9.

regarded with suspicion if they desire to work past the age of 30.[30] In 2009, UNDP's 'Gender Empowerment Measure' – a measure of economic and political participation and decision-making, and power over economic resources – ranked Japan as 57 out of 108 countries.[31] This places Japan in the company of nations such as Kyrgyzstan (56), Russia (60) and the Philippines (59), and far below other comparable developed nations, such as Australia (7), New Zealand (10) and Singapore (16).[32] In the 2013 Human Development Report, due to a change in indicators, Japan fares better – ranking 21 out of 148 on the recently introduced Gender Inequality Index. Rather than focusing solely on empowerment and participation, this index also captures statistics on reproductive health, an area where Japan as a developed nation performs well. However, on the level of labour force participation and seats in national parliament, Japan continues to trail behind other developed nations – with 49.4% of women participating in the labour force compared with 71% of men, and only 13.4% of seats in parliament held by women.[33]

In addition to the quantitative measures of Japan's gender equality status presented above, Japan's sexual and gender culture is significant for this case study. While a detailed discussion is beyond the scope of this thesis, two general points are relevant to the way in which gendered roles were performed following the GEJET. First, Japan is well-known to tolerate a range of sexual activities that may be considered morally grey or outright intolerable in the mainstream western world, and Japan has been referred to as having a 'prostitution culture'.[34] Such practices include *enjo kōsai* – roughly translated as 'compensated dating', where often underage women, primarily schoolgirls, are paid by older patrons for companionship including sexual favours.[35] Notably, when this practice has been condemned, blame has often been

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[30] Karen Kelsky, "Gender, Modernity, and Eroticized Internationalism in Japan," in *Transcultural Japan: At the Borderlands of Race, Gender and Identity*, eds. David Blake Willis and Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 91.
[31] United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2009. Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development* (New York: UNDP, 2009), 186.
[32] Ibid., 190.
[33] ———, *Human Development Report 2013. The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World*, 158.
[34] Chan-Tiberghien, *Gender and Human Rights Politics in Japan: Global Norms and Domestic Networks*, 40.
[35] Ibid., 41.

attributed to consumerist schoolgirls, rather than the men eliciting the arrangement.[36] Second, and closely related to this, is the dominance and preferences of youthful, childlike femininity through Japanese popular culture.[37] This fetishisation of youth and cuteness[38] is demonstrated, for example, through the recent growth of maid cafés[39] – where cute young girls dressed in maids' outfits serve their mostly male masters (customers), and the constant use of young girls (and sometimes boys) in popular art forms such as *manga.* Notably, the latter includes several forms of *hentai manga* (erotic manga), which includes the popular genre of *lolicon* (derived from the term 'Lolita complex' – featuring eroticised images of girls between the ages of 6 and 12), as well as *goukan purei* (rape play). These gendered cultural practices, along with the statistical evidence provided above, suggest an underlying societal structure which reinforces a prescribed form of submissive and cute femininity and discourages those that step outside these boundaries. As this chapter considers the gendered after-effects of GEJET, where these favoured gender roles and identities were challenged, it is important to keep this in mind.

One final element of the Japanese context is particularly relevant for the purposes of this case study – the association of gender equality, feminism and women's liberation with internationalism. While domestic legislation supporting women's rights and empowerment has increased over the last 10 to 15 years, research has shown that this has been strongly influenced by changes on the global stage, rather than a well-developed Japanese women's movement.[40] The Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1994, had a major impact on Japanese women and effected incremental change within Japanese society.[41] This is thought to have occurred as a result of issue-group mobilisation rather than bureaucratic

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[36] Lorraine Radford and Kaname Tsutsumi, "Globalization and Violence Against Women - Inequalities in Risks, Responsibilities and Blame in the UK and Japan," *Women's Studies International Forum* 27 (2004): 5.

[37] See: Laura Miller, "Cute Masquerade and the Pimping of Japan," *International Journal of Japanese Sociology* 20, no. 1 (2011).

[38] See: Sharon Kinsella, "Cuties in Japan," in *Women, Media and Consumption in Japan*, eds. Brian Moeran and Lise Scov (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995).

[39] See: Ben Groundwater. "Is This the Craziest Place on Earth?" http://www.smh.com.au/travel/blogs/the-backpacker/is-this-the-craziest-place-on-earth-20120731-23bwr.html, 20 September 2013.

[40] Chan-Tiberghien, *Gender and Human Rights Politics in Japan: Global Norms and Domestic Networks*, 2-4.

[41] Ibid., 126.

reform, and interestingly has remained limited to Japanese nationals.[42] Chan-Tiberghien notes that the Japanese Government's response to domestic violence has focused on violence against Japanese women rather than violence against women *in* Japan. Minority groups are considered separate from mainstream Japanese, as are foreign nationals living in Japan. In particular, those involved in the sex industry have not been the focus of programs to address violence.[43]

In Japan, gender equality discourse, and particularly feminist discourse, is often associated with the international, or sometimes, the west. Domestic narratives of women's liberation frequently suggest that for Japanese women to become truly free they must escape physically or metaphorically from the hold of Japanese tradition – to the international sphere. For example, the 1990 book *Onnawachikyū o aishiteru* (Women Love the Earth) provides the following description of Japan:

> Japan, Inc.- the original male-dominated society. But this society doesn't know where to turn in the midst of internationalization and globalization ... Compared to Japanese men, Japanese women right now are clearly more independent, have more concern for society, are awakened to the interdependence between the individual and the world at large ... Nowadays there are many Japanese women who are active on the world stage; they are individuals who have crossed borders, and embody a practical humanism in the midst of "global democratic society."[44]

Researcher Karen Kelsky speaks of Japanese women as 'social refugees', who turn to the foreign to escape the gendered structures of Japan. In this way, non-traditional conceptions of gender identity also become associated with foreignness. As a result, they are often rejected as such within areas of Japan where traditional family and corporate structures endure.[45] Tohoku – the area hit hardest by the earthquake and tsunami – is one of these areas, where the ageing population more or less continues to observe traditional gendered roles and structures. The relationship between what is considered Japanese and what is considered

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[42] Ibid., 121.
[43] Ibid., 9.
[44] Cited in Kelsky, "Gender, Modernity, and Eroticized Internationalism in Japan," 90.

foreign, and the ascribed value of each in the Japanese context, is central to this case study and an issue that will be revisited later in the chapter.

It is important to consider one final aspect of the Japanese context before turning to the case study itself – the approach of the Japanese Government's own international aid agency, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), to gender issues, when applied abroad. Here, like most other donor nations, Japan has followed international best practice and, in rhetoric at least, applies gender mainstreaming principles in its work.[46] JICA notes on its website the importance of conducting gender analysis prior to developing and delivering aid in a given context, and the need for sex, age, ethnicity and religion-disaggregated data.[47] Further, JICA's policy statement on gender mainstreaming suggests that this approach draws from Japan's own work domestically in ensuring a gender equal society.[48] While JICA was not responsible for the delivery of disaster relief in Japan following the 2011 GEJET, this policy approach is significant as it outlines the Japanese Government's approach to providing relief aid internationally. Given the close ties between the JRCS and the Japanese Government, it might be expected that these policies would have an impact on the domestic relief setting. As will be argued as this case study progresses, they appear to have had little to no influence in the domestic setting.

Case Study Background and Method

This case study draws on face-to-face interviews conducted between February and April 2012 with representatives of aid organisations and individuals contributing to the humanitarian response to the GEJET. Approximately 20 individuals participated in the study, representing around 15 different humanitarian organisations with varying roles and mandates in the response. Interviewees included staff of the JRCS, IFRC and ICRC in Tokyo, along with

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[45] Ibid., 86-92.
[46] JICA. "Gender and Development: JICA Activities." http://www.jica.go.jp/english/our_work/thematic_issues/gender/activity.html, 11 September 2013.
[47] ———. "Gender and Development." http://www.jica.go.jp/english/our_work/thematic_issues/gender/overview.html, 11 September 2013.
[48] ———. "Gender Mainstreaming: Inclusive and Dynamic Development." http://www.jica.go.jp/english/publications/brochures/pdf/gender_EN.pdf, 11 September 2013.

representatives of the JRCS's sister societies, local NGOs and international non-governmental organisations (INGOS) both working specifically on gender issues and providing more generalised relief. Interviews were conducted in a number of locations in Japan and Australia, including in Tokyo (where the headquarters of JRCS is located) and Tohoku's capital city, Sendai, where many participants were both directly affected by the disaster and involved in the humanitarian response. Interviews were semi-structured, lasted up to two hours, and were conducted in either English or Japanese (with the assistance of a translator) on the request of the interviewee. Participants were asked to share their experiences and views on how gender impacted on relief and recovery needs following the disaster and how it was (or was not) considered relevant to the response framework of their own organisation and others with whom they had worked. Further, participants were invited to discuss their conceptual understandings of 'gender', 'gender equality' and 'feminism' in relation to humanitarian and social justice programming both in the GEJET response and more broadly. Along with these interviews, which focus on subjective perceptions and experiences of the GEJET, the chapter also draws heavily on concept and evaluation documents provided by participating organisations, which provide more standardised organisational perspectives.

Throughout the fieldwork, focus was kept on the response to the earthquake and tsunami with limited engagement on issues related to the more gradual effects of the ensuing nuclear accident. This focus was chosen in part because of access issues, but also to allow for comparison of this analysis with other similar disaster responses globally. The RCRC Movement was selected for analysis because of its prominent position in humanitarian relief both within Japan as the JRCS, and internationally as the ICRC/IFRC – often declared the founding movement of modern humanitarianism.[49]

[49] Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism*, 1.

> The discussion on gender and inequality and social customs is very important for the [aid] industry. If you want to do something in a disaster, you have to be very conscious of this. And here [in Japan], it was obvious also.[50]

The damage and impact of the GEJET on communities in Tohoku was vast, both qualitatively and quantitatively. With the epicentre of the magnitude 9.0 earthquake only 120km off the Sanriku Coast of Sendai, the resulting tsunami hit coastal communities within 30 minutes. The most severe damage occurred in the Tohoku prefectures of Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima, with a total of seven prefectures hit covering 700km of coastline. Of the 15,237 people confirmed dead, 92.5% were victims of drowning, and around 65% were over the age of 60. Approximately 400,000 people were evacuated with over 114,000 houses destroyed and nearly 700,000 damaged, and public infrastructure devastated in many places. With such a widespread impact, relief and recovery needs were also diverse and extensive. Major relief organisations, including the JRCS, and the Japanese Government have detailed the damage extensively and provided accounts of perceived needs of the affected populations and the activities launched in response to these.[51]

Perceived needs in disaster situations reflect, to varying degrees, the mandate, interests and identity of the particular humanitarian provider and indeed their own framing of needs assessments and eventual response. Specialist organisations such as Handicap International, for example, will often frame their understandings specifically around their mandate; in this case, 'to take action to assist persons with disabilities during humanitarian crises following armed conflicts or natural disasters.'[52] At the same time, humanitarian organisations are accountable to international humanitarian frameworks such as the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere Standards).[53] This is particularly so in non-specialist humanitarian organisations, including the JRCS and IFRC, that work broadly to '... inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities,

[50] IFRC Country representative Japan, Interview with Author, Tokyo, 4 April 2012.
[51] Japanese Red Cross Society, "Japan: Earthquake and Tsunami: 12 Month Report," 2-3.
[52] Handicap International. "Emergency Aid." http://www.handicapinternational.be/en/emergency-aid, 30 May 2012.
[53] The Sphere Project, *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response*.

with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering ...'[54] Indeed, the JRCS notes in its regular GEJET progress reports that:

> All Japanese Red Cross and IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the ... Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable ... The Japanese Red Cross and IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 ...[55]

Both the Sphere Standards and the IFRC's own Strategy 2020 include explicit mention of gender as a priority area throughout their text. Strategy 2020, for example, notes, under 'Strategic aim 1: Save Lives, Protect Livelihoods and Strengthen Recovery from Disasters and Crises', that:

> Following a disaster or in a crisis situation, humanitarian assistance and protection must be appropriate to the requirements that have been identified through timely and specific assessments. Any humanitarian assistance must be sensitive to *gender*, age and other socio-economic considerations, as well as being proportionate to the magnitude of the situation. Assistance must be provided first to the most vulnerable people and delivered in a way that respects their dignity.[56] [emphasis added]

Yet the JRCS's assessment of needs lacked intentional attention to gender. While other vulnerable groups were identified, especially but not limited to the large elderly population in the affected areas, gender analysis was not conducted and gender-specific needs remained largely unidentified and unaddressed in the response. Although space constraints prevent a comprehensive discussion of gender-specific needs in the GEJET response context, it is worthwhile here noting briefly some of the issues that were identified by other relief groups and individuals as gender-specific areas of concern following the disaster. Major gender issues identified by specialist and non-specialist interviewees working on the GEJET are as follows:[57]

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[54] Japanese Red Cross Society, "Japan: Earthquake and Tsunami: 12 Month Report," 14.
[55] Ibid.
[56] IFRC. "Strategy 2020: Saving Lives, Changing Minds." http://www.ifrc.org/en/who-we-are/vision-and-mission/strategy-2020/, 15 April 2012, 13.
[57] Note that these issues have been identified as problems with the post-GEJET situation generally and are not necessarily a result of particular action/inaction of the JRCS/IFRC.

- Privacy: In the overcrowded context of the evacuation centres, many women identified a lack of privacy and changing areas as contributing to personal insecurity and vulnerability. Although partitions were supplied in some centres, in others they were not available or declined by centre administrators as they were considered 'unnecessary'. Bathrooms were unisex, often outside of the evacuation centres and without lighting at night.[58]
- Access: Gender-specific relief items (for example, feminine hygiene kits for women) were unavailable for some time following the disaster.[59]
- Compensation: There were issues of access to compensation grants for women who had lost their husbands in the disaster, where grants were being paid directly to a widow's in-laws.[60]
- Work burden: Female evacuees were expected to prepare three meals per day for the hundreds of evacuees that were residing in the centres, often working from dawn until late in the night. This included pregnant women who were reportedly often afraid to bring attention to their condition to the dominantly male leadership of the evacuation centres. Many women reported that they 'worked more than their bodies could handle even though they weren't feeling very well.'[61]
- Economic opportunity: As programs have progressed from relief into recovery stages, there has been an increasing focus on job creation. However, few programs deal with economic viability for women.[62]
- Mental health: Isolation, depression, anxiety and alcoholism have had gendered impacts upon both men and women following the GEJET. Interviewees report that many men particularly, now unemployed, feel a lack of self-worth and have turned to alcohol and *pachinko,*[63] suffer with depression and have become increasingly

[58] Independent NGO Consultant, Interview with Author.
[59] Local non-profit organisation (NPO) representative (Miyagi-Jonet), "Interview with Author."
[60] Program Coordinator Church World Service Japan, Interview with Author.
[61] Representative of Sendai Gender Equal Opportunity Foundation, Interview with Author, Sendai, 9 April 2012.
[62] Independent NGO Consultant, Interview with Author.
[63] Pachinko (パチンコ) is a mechanical game similar to an upright pinball machine. It is often used as a gambling device, sidestepping Japan's general prohibition of gambling.

withdrawn and sometimes violent. There have been reported cases of suicide and isolated deaths particularly amongst men.[64]

- Domestic violence: Levels of domestic violence reportedly increased following the GEJET, especially amongst those living in evacuation centres and then temporary housing.[65]
- Other gender-based violence: Anecdotal reports of volunteers being victims of sexualised violence in evacuation centres are widespread. Volunteers have most often been foreign or non-local Japanese women with evacuees staying at the centres perpetrating the violence.[66]
- Child pornography and trafficking: Interviewees mentioned instances of both trafficking of young girls and the circulation of naked pictures of children by volunteers.[67]
- Foreigners: There was a lack of support for non-Japanese-speaking foreigners in Tohoku. This had a gender bias, with many wives of Japanese men in the region originally coming from neighbouring Asian countries and relocating to live with their husbands, therefore being distant from their own family networks after the GEJET.[68]
- Gendered institutions and administrations: Some women felt uncomfortable and/or unable to approach evacuation centre authorities with their specific needs due to a perceived power inequality with (mostly) male leaders. Gender imbalance in staffing profiles of relief organisations was also mentioned as being problematic in some cases.[69]
- Lack of recognition: Several participants identified lack of recognition of gender issues as present and significant.[70]

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[64] Local non-profit organisation (NPO) representative (Hearty Sendai), Interview with Author, Sendai, 9 April 2012.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Independent NGO Consultant, Interview with Author.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Representative of Sendai Gender Equal Opportunity Foundation, Interview with Author.
[70] Independent NGO Consultant, Interview with Author.

This list does not comprehensively detail all gender issues, nor does it represent all gendered experiences in Tohoku following the GEJET. It is presented here to draw attention to the types of issues that may be 'missed' and left unaddressed as a result of the failure to conduct gender analysis or ensure a relief effort is gender sensitive. Given the seriousness and impact on personal and community security and prosperity of many of these issues, the lack of attention to them in JRCS's operational response is significant. The contributory factors to this lack of attention thus require examination and it is to this analysis the chapter now turns. The following three issues to be examined are interconnected and overlapping, but have been separated here for analytical coherence.

Implementing Organisation: Gender in the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement – Identity, Norms and Mandates

> You have to look back to the history of the Red Cross. The Red Cross was originally set up for emergency situations. It's only recently that we've gotten more engaged in the development side of things and the empowerment of women ... The Red Cross is new in the development arena and still learning how to do that, and that's why I think it is still catching up with the NGOs.[71]

The RCRC Movement is unique amongst the humanitarian community in its identity and mandate and in its organisational structure and governance. Both have a direct influence on the way in which gender is conceptualised and implemented by national societies within the movement. Historically concerned with humanitarian assistance, disaster preparedness and promoting humanitarian values and protection of civilians during wartime, the RCRC Movement was founded on seven guiding principles – humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality.[72] This focus, along with a strong organisational concern with maintaining humanitarian access, has encouraged the RCRC Movement to pursue a less overt gender agenda than many of its counterparts in the UN and NGO community. As the effectiveness of the RCRC Movement is determined by its ability to

[71] International Emergencies Officer Australian Red Cross, Interview with Author, Melbourne, 22 February 2012.
[72] ICRC, "The Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent."

gain humanitarian access in often difficult operating contexts, perceived neutrality, impartiality and (particularly) independence are highly valued within the movement. An RCRC Manager for Humanitarian Emergencies explains as follows:

> I don't think the Red Cross see it [gender] as a primary function of their being – that being to help those people in need and then the seven principles – which by assumption gender is included, but I don't think it would be helpful for the Red Cross to have a title, because it may alienate people in terms of reputation and perception. In reality it would put them in a position that wouldn't necessarily aid their cause. The Red Cross is extremely careful about reputation and what it is seen to be.[73]

This is not to say that the RCRC Movement is not aware of the importance of gender sensitivity in policy and programming or that it is not addressed, but rather that it is not presented discursively as central to their core mandate. Instead, vulnerability is considered under the broader framing of protection:

> It's not that gender wasn't an issue, but that it was covered by a larger concept of protection ... I mean we do work for women, but we don't use this term gender mainstreaming – everything is put under protection. For us the need comes first, then you identify categories.[74]

This conceptualisation allows for a nuanced understanding of the significance of particular gender sensitivities (and other vulnerability factors) in humanitarian responses. Policies and programs that are more contextually sensitive and relevant are therefore possible. Unfortunately, such framing also enables gender considerations to be determined irrelevant in given contexts – or at least comparatively irrelevant to other factors affecting vulnerability, without necessarily conducting gender analysis. In some cases, it also allows priority issues to be determined in accordance with local government and donor priorities rather than on analysis. The JRCS's lack of attention to gender is likely one example of this. Here gender was considered irrelevant in a context where gender equality was perceived to be a relative non-

[73] International Emergencies Officer Australian Red Cross, Interview with Author.
[74] Representative of ICRC Japan, Interview with Author, Tokyo, 5 April 2012.

issue in a highly advanced (read: gender equal) society and the Japanese Government did not wish to draw attention to the issue.[75]

The approach of the RCRC Movement to gender also derives from its focus on humanitarian aid rather than development aid. As a policy concept, gender grew from within the development community with the 1970s introduction of the women in development (WID) agenda.[76] With its focus firmly on humanitarian response, the RCRC Movement has only recently begun to work in longer term developing contexts and thus has not been involved in the historical evolution of policy on this issue. Consequently, attention to gender as a priority issue has been variable across the RCRC Movement. After all, there are 188 RCRC national societies as well as the IFRC and ICRC, each operating with fluctuating levels of attention to and understanding of gender in policy and an even wider variation in implementation. One participant suggested that focus on gender in aid began within the NGO community and to some extent the UN, and that the RCRC Movement is still 'catching up'. In his words: 'I don't think it's something that has organically grown from within.'[77] This does not imply that the RCRC Movement and individual societies within it are ignorant of gender principles. However, it does suggest that where awareness and attention to gender equality is not prominent broadly within local community, it is similarly not likely to be prominent in the work of RCRC national societies. This is certainly the case in Japan, and especially so in the regional arms of the JRCS based in tsunami-affected prefectures.[78]

Before moving to talk specifically about Japan and the JRCS, a few clarifications about the make-up of the RCRC Movement are needed. Far from being operationally integrated, the three major components of the movement – the ICRC, IFRC and the movement's 188 national societies – work under the fundamental principles and a broad strategic direction, outlined in

[75] Representative of Sendai Gender Equal Opportunity Foundation, Interview with Author.
[76] Rathgeber, "WID, WAD, GAD: Trends in Research and Practice," 489-502.
[77] International Emergencies Officer Australian Red Cross, Interview with Author.
[78] Tohoku is known as being a more traditional area of Japan and was described by several participants as being 'non-progressive' on social issues such as gender equality.

the Handbook of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.[79] Philosophically, the three components are highly aligned. Practically, each component maintains a high degree of independence and freedom in setting specific operational and policy priorities and each operates under a specific mandate. The ICRC's role mandated, as mentioned through international law, is to lead and coordinate the movement's activities in conflict situations and promote humanitarian law and principles. National societies act as auxiliaries to their own governments, providing a range of services, including disaster relief, social welfare and health programs, including in times of war. The IFRC acts as the umbrella organisation for the international activities of the movement's national societies. With a secretariat in Geneva, along with several regional field delegations, the IFRC coordinates and leads the movement's international response to natural, technological and health disasters and to refugees in non-conflict settings. It promotes cooperation between national societies and provides overarching support to the national societies – its member organisations.[80]

Although each national society must be approved by the ICRC and meet several standards before becoming a member,[81] the ICRC operates independently from the rest of the movement. The IFRC, as the umbrella organisation for the national societies, has few control or compliance mechanisms to hold member societies accountable on policy issues or approaches. Operational guidance and policy implementation across the IFRC and national societies is fragmented, beyond the commitment to the fundamental principles.[82] On gender policy and practice, the IFRC plays a lobbying and guidance role with its member societies, but has no power of enforcement. Further, the IFRC's gender policy,[83] intended to guide the federation as a whole, currently has no thorough roll-out plan or approach to ensuring member societies adhere to its commitments.[84] At national society level, any attention to the

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[79] International Red Cross and Red Crescent, *Handbook of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement* (Geneva: ICRC, 2008).
[80] ICRC. "Components and Bodies of the International Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent." http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/misc/components-movement.htm, 20 September 2013.
[81] These are mainly administrative. See: ———. "Conditions for Recognition of National Societies." http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/misc/6erk5h.htm, 20 September 2013.
[82] Former IFRC staff member, Interview with Author, Geneva, 5 July 2012.
[83] See: IFRC. "Gender Policy." http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Governance/Policies/gender-policy-en.pdf, 20 September 2013.
[84] IFRC representative, Interview with Author, Geneva, 2 July 2012.

issue is driven from within and has often come down to individual staff members with an interest in forwarding the agenda. In some cases, where the value of integrating a gender perspective has been seen within a national society, independent national gender policies have been launched, with no clear vision of how these should interact with the IFRC policy.[85] In short, in the words of one participant in this study, 'national societies are sovereign',[86] despite their overall commitment to the movement principles.

As the national society in Japan, the JRCS is obliged by mandate to abide as much with national government policies on emergency response as with RCRC Movement frameworks. In this sense, governmental priorities, both explicit and implicit, dominate the international policy directions of the IFRC and ICRC in which gender is more prominent. One staff member of the JRCS expressed the relationship between the international movement and domestic directives as follows:

> Of course we do follow the seven principles and we do participate in the International Red Cross conference that is held every four years. But we do understand that in order for us to work we have to be in close coordination with the national government and because the national government has different priorities, we have to work within the nation state framework ...[87]

Although the Japanese Government did introduce some basic measures for ensuring gender equality and sensitivity, including producing gender guidelines for disaster response, there was no reported effort at monitoring or enforcing adherence to these guidelines during the relief effort.[88] Conversely, some NGO representatives working in the response reported that they were told that the priority of the government was fairness of relief and not 'women':

> ... so initially, especially in the immediate aftermath, we were told that yes women need support maybe but we can't deal with that right now. This isn't a priority. Recently, when

[85] See, for example: Australian Red Cross. "Policy Statement on Gender." http://www.redcross.org.au/files/Policy_on_Gender.pdf, 20 September 2013.
[86] IFRC representative, Interview with Author.
[87] Representative of JRCS, Interview with Author, Tokyo, 4 April 2012.
[88] These guidelines were issued after the Great Hanshin Earthquake and were described to me by a participant. They are currently not available in English. Program Coordinator Church World Service Japan, Interview with Author.

> we say we provide support for women, people do say, well men have a hard time too, are you going to do anything for the men?[89]

In this operating environment, and given the JRCS mandate as designated authority for disaster relief in Japan, there was little incentive in the domestic context to ensure programming and policy was gender sensitive. Further, as the operational capacity of the JRCS (along with the Japanese Government) is extensive, few international organisations were required or invited to assist in implementation of the relief effort. This includes Red Cross sister societies, the IFRC and ICRC who primarily assisted by providing financial support and occasional technical expertise in areas such as monitoring and evaluation, communications and public relations. The lesser number of responders and the domination of domestic agencies ensured that the relief response was led by the national rather than international policy agenda – and in this case, one that put less emphasis on enforcing gender sensitivity with regards to projects.

Disaster: 'Japaneseness' – Homogeneity, Resistance to Otherness and Self-perception

Interviews with those involved in relief efforts suggested that the priorities and attitudes attributed to the Japanese Government were not anomalous within the wider Japanese aid community following the GEJET. Context and culture are essential in determining how aid can be most effective for affected communities. Likewise, examination of context and culture can help to explain why aid agendas may sometimes be perceived as not being in the interest of all affected persons. The contextual specificities that impacted on how gender was perceived and addressed in the relief response to the GEJET are numerous.

Firstly, interviewees suggested that the relative homogeneity of Japanese society was significant. This homogeneity was perceived as eliciting a simultaneous resistance to what is foreign and insistence on cultural sensitivity in relief provision, including with regard to gender roles and power relations. Both gender and gender equality were, as mentioned above,

[89] Representative of Sendai Gender Equal Opportunity Foundation, Interview with Author.

perceived as foreign concepts, holding varying degrees of significance for interviewees, but not necessarily relevant to everyday lives. As one participant explained:

> ... [gender is a] foreign-origin word – katakana[90] – and I didn't realise this until I did an event on gender and it took me a long time to find a speaker. Gender is viewed as a very academic – a very hard term, which I don't think of it as at all in my own understanding.[91]

In some feminist accounts, including those written by Japanese women, men as well as some women are portrayed as actively seeking to prevent western influence on Japan, particularly in the division of gender roles and the domestic sphere. In some cases, they are portrayed as openly detesting foreignness.[92] The cultural continuity of Japanese society – in one participant's words, its unquestioned 'Japaneseness'[93] – has contributed to a resistance towards change, especially when viewed as coming from the outside. In many cases, moral values are perceived as being demonstrated through shared traditions – an ethical model that supports a communitarian social structure.[94] This communitarian structure is often placed in opposition to the individualistic claims of women's liberation perceived to be associated with western understandings of gender equality. Moreover, with the family often being understood as the primary defining aspect of Japanese cultural tradition, changes to this societal structure have been presented as anti-Japanese/foreign.[95] Traditional familial customs, including those related to gender roles, persist in much of the country, especially in the north which was perceived by many interviewees as being less 'progressive' than the south. In this context, there was reported sentiment that the culture of Tohoku needed to be respected, including by organisations and individuals who may have perceived themselves as more open-minded. As one participant (a foreign-born Japanese citizen) expressed regarding the lack of discussion (and the undesirability of discussion) around gender issues:

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[90] The Japanese language uses three separate scripts – hiragana, katakana and kanji. Katakana is used for words of foreign origin. Gender is translated as ジェンダー (jendā).
[91] Independent NGO Consultant, Interview with Author.
[92] Kelsky, "Gender, Modernity, and Eroticized Internationalism in Japan," 94.
[93] IFRC Country representative Japan, "Interview with Author."
[94] Yukiko Nishikawa, *Japan's Changing Role in Humanitarian Crises* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), 158.
[95] Chan-Tiberghien, *Gender and Human Rights Politics in Japan: Global Norms and Domestic Networks*, 147.

> ... it was actually a Japanese woman who was brought up outside Japan who said, well, we have to respect their culture in Tohoku, country people they have a different attitude towards women ... And you know I see this all the time with Japanese NGOs as well. You have to respect their culture ... there's this idea amongst some Japanese NGOs that they're superior to western NGOs because we respect their culture.[96]

Such attitudes, along with the demonstrated organisational capacity of national and local NGOs to perform effectively, ensured their policy and operational dominance. However, most Japanese organisations working on the response, including the JRCS's domestic division which was responsible for its relief program, had little experience dealing with large-scale disasters. They were also largely unfamiliar with and sometimes resistant to international norms and standards for emergency relief. An oft-expressed frustration of several smaller issue-based NGOs was that international standards were perceived by large-scale NGOs to be irrelevant for the GEJET response. These NGOs argued that the international standards presented in them were too low for the advanced Japanese context (having been developed with developing contexts in mind). Regardless of the veracity of this statement, disregard for international frameworks ensured that attention to issues such as gender was sporadic across organisations throughout the effort. Without overt reference to gender, the consequences of this are expressed well by John Morris in his personal account of the disaster.

> Large scale NGOs with professional staff experienced with international standards and guidelines for providing aid in emergencies have provided invaluable expertise and support for overworked local governments struggling to find ways to deal with a disaster exceeding all expectations. On the other hand, uninformed volunteers purportedly working in the best interests of the victims of disaster, but in ignorance of such standards and guidelines, can do more harm than good ... In more than one case we have witnessed cases of aid and support that ran counter to the purpose of achieving the social and economic independence of its recipients. Aid which does not respect the human rights of its recipients, and which does not respect nor restore their self-dignity, in the long run, will do more harm than good.[97]

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[96] Independent NGO Consultant, Interview with Author.

[97] John Morris, "Recovery in Tohoku," in *Natural Disaster and Nuclear Crisis in Japan. Response and Recovery after Japan's 3/11*, ed. Jeff Kingston (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 45.

Secondly, and related to the reported desire to protect the togetherness and sameness of Japanese society, interviewees suggested that organisations seeking to tackle issues of social inequality were confronted with resistance related to, what one participant described as, the 'inside/outside issue in Japan'.[98] In simple terms, this refers to a fear of being perceived as different (read: abnormal) within a dominant national narrative of cultural sameness.[99] In the relief context, this extends to a reluctance to identify 'others' on their behalf in order to address their specific needs. This was particularly the case during the administration of evacuation centres, where some interviewees reported that some evacuation centre administrators would not report the concerns of evacuees to aid organisations, or allow organisation representatives to speak to evacuees unaccompanied. One interviewee elaborated:

> ... this is a problem that groups have when they're working with what is called relative poverty – people make up these long terms to work with them, because if you point out that these people don't have economic resources, you put them outside the mainstream ... And that's what's been interesting – to have a lot of people come from New Orleans and compare the situation [with Hurricane Katrina]. A lot of people are actually interested now in Japan to bring up those issues. You have racial issues in the US, we don't have that here – you have poverty in the US, we don't have poverty here – but actually we do. That's again – that's putting people on the outside.[100]

This fear of difference impacts negatively on possibilities for attention to gender issues (amongst many others) in disaster programming. A desire to remain in the mainstream may discourage individuals to discuss their experiences and/or needs. Anecdotal evidence provided during interviews also suggested that ambitions for sameness had a direct impact in the identification of needs in the GEJET response. For example, one participant recounted that evacuation centre authorities had been reluctant to identify issues such as gender-based

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[98] Independent NGO Consultant, Interview with Author.

[99] For further discussion on cultural homogeneity in Japan, see: Chris Burgess, "Maintaining Identities: Discourses of Homogeneity in a Rapidly Globalizing Japan," *Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies* 4, no. 1 (2004). Michael Weiner, ed. *Japan's Minorities: The Illusion of Homogeneity* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009).

[100] Independent NGO Consultant, Interview with Author.

violence, domestic violence and harassment in their centres to prevent being labelled as 'different' by having a 'bad reputation'.[101]

Finally, a dominant perception – nationally and internationally – that Japan is both a 'safe place' and a 'high-income country' was reported by some interviewees to reduce the thoroughness of needs assessments following the GEJET. This included a reluctance to reflect critically on vulnerability factors within Japan. This perception is not unique to the Japanese context and indeed was argued to be common across disasters in high-income countries, although arguably more acute in the Japanese context for reasons discussed above. Issues of safety, security and needs were viewed as universally consistent amongst those in affected areas of the disaster – with specific vulnerabilities associated, for example, with gender, age, and disability to be absent. A representative from the IFRC explained, with reference to the evaluation of the JRCS/IFRC response:

> ... we are not perceiving it [gender] as a problem in our societies. We called the evaluation 'Large Scale Disasters in High Income Countries' because we think that there are aspects of responses to large scale disasters in high income countries that really are fundamentally different to what we find in other large scale disasters ... there is the question of vulnerability – and the perception that we don't have vulnerability. Japan is the most technologically advanced and most rich country in the world. But come on ... this old woman who is having her 70th birthday – you know the pension she gets? She has not worked, and most of them haven't worked, because they belong to a different generation. Minimum pension is ¥70,000. I mean four bananas are ¥100. Four oranges are ¥400. And cheese is ¥5,000 per kilo, not that they can buy it. House rent ... ¥70,000 is not enough. I'm paying ¥12,000 per night and probably you too. That is totally out of context for a woman having ¥70,000. She has to eat. So she is socially highly disadvantaged, even though she is better off than a fisherman in Sudan. But she is not an important part of the political context because the self-image is: 'we are rich, this is advanced society.'[102]

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[101] Ibid.

[102] IFRC Country representative Japan, "Interview with Author."

This image is potentially damaging for those affected by disaster who do not fit this frame as it can lead to their particular needs being ignored in mainstream relief efforts. It is also important for understanding the interaction between the international aid community and the JRCS/IFRC on the GEJET response, to which this chapter now turns.

Response Context: Trust and Perception – The Place of 'Global' Standards in a Developed Country

As this thesis has detailed, gender has a strong discursive presence in the international aid community. Most INGOs and UN agencies adhere to gender mainstreaming principles and, as noted, the RCRC Movement includes gender as one vulnerability factor under their protection framework.[103] Donors emphasise the need for gender equality principles to be implemented and often include reporting requirements for their partners specifically on gender equality indicators.[104] Given the prominence gender holds in international aid consciousness, why has the international aid community, and particularly the JRCS's sister societies, not insisted upon attention to gender issues in the JRCS's GEJET response? The answer is simple: because of Japan's place within the international (western) donor community. Interviews suggest that this is largely related to perceptions of Japan as an advanced society among the developed/donor countries, with values compatible with those of their home countries. Inherent (and arguably misplaced) feelings of trust that 'like' societies such as Japan will uphold global value systems are evident.[105] One non-Japanese participant explains his perception of the difference between a developed and developing country context and its relationship with the international aid donor (read: developed country) community as follows:

> ... if there is an intervention in South Sudan, you, as a desk officer, would stick your nose in and say: 'Now, now, they're not like Australians. We will make a logical framework plan here and what are the principles it's based on?' ... You would have a logical framework, a

[103] ICRC, "ICRC Protection Policy," *International Review of the Red Cross* 90, no. 871 (September 2008).
[104] For example, AusAID has gender equality as one of its six mandatory quality reporting requirements. See: AusAID. "Guideline: Completing a Quality at Implementation Report." http://www.spc.int/hiv/index2.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=462&Itemid=148, 1 June 2012.
[105] Japan remains one of the few non-western countries to be a member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and of the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) group.

> three-year plan with defined timelines and you would have milestones where they would have to prove that they've become Australians ... You would say: 'Unless you do what I'm saying, I'm going to stop the money and you will all be sacked and you will die, I don't care.' That would be your approach. And you would even go there and say: 'Look, I don't like this man. He is gender-insensitive. Sack him' ... You would say: 'You are taking 10% and giving it to the starving children in your village? That's not in the logical framework plan. I sack you.' And you would really be tough and after three years you would say: 'Now I've done my program. I stop it here tomorrow morning. Everyone will be sacked.' And the program closes down, and the farmers will die. And you will go back home and be happy. That is the way you deal with South Sudan.
>
> In Japan, you would say: 'Hi. You had a disaster? I have 30 million [dollars]. Please take them.' And then you would say, 'Japan is a highly cultured country, so I'm not asking any questions – a framework? Forget it' ... it's an advanced society so you are not questioning their principles because that would be culturally insensitive. You would say: 'I'm not asking for accountability, because I trust them.' You would say: 'I don't meddle, because that would be impolite and we know that Japanese are very polite.' And you wouldn't question basically anything. You would take your 30 million and give it to the Japanese and say: 'If you invite me to come and eat dinner now and then, I would be happy.' And then: 'Please give us some stories for the Australian TV so we can show what we have done.' And that means that all the money that came in, all the 1200 million dollars that came to the Japanese Red Cross Society, are without strings attached. And very much without cultural strings attached, because that would be culturally unacceptable for you ... [we] cannot question the values of Japan. But you wouldn't hesitate for a second to question the values of Tonga or Papua New Guinea ...[106]

The relationship that exists between Japan and the JRCS with the international donor and aid community is highly significant here. More often a donor than recipient nation, Japan is a high-income country that has achieved both power and respect amongst donor peers. Importantly, trust in the integrity of the JRCS follows foremost from its position as a Japanese organisation, not its identity as an RCRC national society. The same level of confidence and lack of accountability measures were not seen, for example, when donors channel funds through the Haitian Red Cross Society. Indeed, when responding to the Haitian earthquake of 2010, many

[106] IFRC Country representative Japan, "Interview with Author."

donors chose instead to work through the ICRC or fellow developed country Red Cross societies, such as the American Red Cross Society.[107]

Understandings of Japan's value system as similar if not equal to other developed countries encouraged donors to provide funds without the usual accountability measures in place, and certainly without insisting on specific attention to issues such as gender. This is despite the noted fact above, that Japan is not known for strong positions on human rights and indeed that the terms 'rights' and 'gender' are often perceived as foreign and by consequence mistrusted in the Japanese setting. Even in its international humanitarian practice, there is a strong reluctance within JICA to apply rights-based principles.[108] Although the JRCS did hold 'partnership meetings' to ensure that donors were kept informed about the progress and plans for the response, these were viewed as simple forums for information sharing rather than a place for policy dialogue. The JRCS/ICRC evaluation of the GEJET response explains the relationship between the JRCS and external donors, including within the RCRC Movement:

> Along with the strong motivation to express solidarity with the people of Japan and JRCS, the trust held by donors in the integrity of JRCS and its capacity to deliver services in response to the GEJET resulted in extremely low requests for ear marking of donations, the few exceptions relating to the need to satisfy back donors.[109]

The differences in interaction in developed–developed and developed–developing aid relationships are concerning. They confirm a significant power imbalance in the international system which serves to reinforce the privilege of developed nations. They also ensure the paternal relationships between developed and developing countries continue. In addition, however, and perhaps unexpectedly, this also serves to disadvantage certain groups and individuals in developed contexts, as the international community does not insist on enforcing and operationalising 'global values' as policy frameworks in developed contexts. In the case of

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[107] American Red Cross Society. "Haiti Earthquake Response: Two Year Update." http://www.redcross.org/www-files/Documents/pdf/international/Haiti/HaitiEarthquake_TwoYearReport.pdf, 1 June 2012.

[108] Nishikawa, *Japan's Changing Role in Humanitarian Crises*, 159.

[109] Talbot, Staines, and Wada, "Evaluation: Preparing for and Responding to Large Scale Disasters in High Income Countries. Report: Findings and Lessons Learned from the Japanese Red Cross Society's Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. Comparisons with Experiences in Other Countries. Recommendations", 38.

the JRCS's GEJET response, gender is one of many potential issues that may have suffered as a result.

Applying a Critical Feminist Ethics of Care in Japan

Unlike the other two case studies, there was no identifiable gender policy or practice in the RCRC Movement's response to the GEJET. This chapter has demonstrated that global policy approaches to gender work (dominated by liberal feminism) were considered unnecessary (or inappropriate) for this context. In contrast, a CFEC may have been able to provide an appropriate and adaptable framework for gender-sensitive provision of relief in this context. Again, focusing upon the two areas discussed in the previous case studies – relationships of care and relationships of power – a CFEC may increase attention to the following important issues, to the benefit of many aid recipients. Importantly, for the RCRC Movement, focusing on these areas does not necessarily require a departure from the ICRC principles.

First, by focusing on *relationships of care,* the response may have been able to address the particular needs of not only the majority elderly population in Tohoku, but also those who had caring responsibilities for them. At the same time, the capacities of individuals to assist with additional caring responsibilities may have been better understood by aid providers by identifying those who were overburdened and required further assistance. As noted above, Japanese women often carry the full burden of caring for children and the elderly. Interviewees also noted that in addition to these responsibilities, following the disaster, women evacuees were expected to prepare three meals per day for the occupants of the evacuation centres – reporting that they often worked beyond their physical capacity. Similarly, identifying positive relationships of care that may have been damaged by the disaster, and addressing these, may have assisted in recovery. For example, as discussed, many breadwinners lost their capacity to provide for their families, affecting their psychological, and sometimes physical, wellbeing. Identifying and understanding these relationships may have enabled response efforts to provide stronger support in these areas, thereby assisting in individual and community psychological as well as physical recovery.

Second, concentrating on *relationships of power* may have uncovered the many manifestations of gendered power inequalities that were detrimental to recovery following the disaster. The abovementioned distribution of compensation packages to the in-laws of widowed women is one such example of this. Similarly, attention to relationships of power may have unveiled the particularly vulnerable place of foreigners in Japan (particularly non-Japanese-speaking wives), as well as the increased levels of violence (including sexual violence and child abuse), and insecurity (including economic insecurity) in the months following the GEJET. Again, identifying these issues may have induced follow-on effects in programming, ranging from, for example, the mandatory inclusion of partitions in evacuation centres, to a review of processes for providing compensation to affected persons.

As in the other case studies, recognising the subjectivity of experience and the importance of context would be essential to ensuring such a change in focus as suggested above was appropriate for different individuals and communities affected by the GEJET. The place of Japan in the international humanitarian system as a usual donor, largely responsible for its own relief effort, is particularly significant. Indeed, rather than seeing this as a potential challenge, it could be seen as an opportunity for a donor agency to lead the way on implementing a contextually appropriate, gender-sensitive approach to relief provision. A CFEC approach where traditional gendered structures are not necessarily challenged, but rather understood and engaged with may be an attractive possibility for response work in this context.

Concluding Comments

The contributory factors to the uptake of any social policy are complex. In disaster, the complexity of these factors is intensified as organisations struggle to deal with a situation far beyond their normal capacity. Based on recent interviews conducted with individuals and organisational representatives contributing to the response to the 2011 GEJET, this chapter has outlined three particularly relevant issues that may have contributed to the JRCS's lack of focus on gender issues. Each of the factors discussed, being highly dependent on context, raise

the question of how it might be possible to improve adherence to global policy frameworks on gender equality in disaster response in the Japanese context.

Participants in this study offered several suggestions in this regard, but one theme was recurrent. Gender equality was both too narrow and too confrontational as a concept to receive sustained attention in mainstream organisations in Japan. If gender was to be implemented and addressed within its current frameworks, small issue-based NGOs were considered the most appropriate channel through which to pursue this agenda. For large organisations (including the JRCS) to address the issues discussed in this chapter, and for broader society to accept them as significant, they required reframing. Participants pointed towards focusing generically on social equality and addressing social disadvantage as the most productive way forward. Such a framing would not only make ideas about gender more palatable in the Japanese context but also allow investigation and awareness around other social inequalities and their relevance to disaster relief. This framing is possible with a CFEC.

PART THREE

Chapter Six:

Policy, Practice, System, Theory – Reflections and Pathways to Change

> Many women reported feeling less autonomous due to their forced reliance on male family members if they want to buy basic necessities, learn about and obtain social services, or simply leave the house. Boys were significantly more likely than adult women to leave the house every day or often. Over one fifth of households reported that girls never went outside the house at all.[1]

The extract above describes the current situation of Syrian refugees residing in camp and non-camp situations in Jordan. Highlighting the gendered inequalities facing those displaced by the Syrian Civil War, this quote serves as a timely reminder of the need for a comprehensive, gender-sensitive response to humanitarian crises. It also provides a good place to begin this final substantive chapter of the thesis – a chapter which reflects on the case studies in *Chapters Three* to *Five*, and theory and policy and practice framing discussions in *Chapters One* and *Two*, to identify trends in the analysis and apply these broadly to gender policy and practice in the international humanitarian system as a whole.

Chapter Six brings together the arguments made in chapters one through five to advance three interrelated and overarching claims for the thesis, as follows. First, the chapter argues that in the current international humanitarian system, gender policy is implemented and conceptualised inconsistently, with wide-ranging effects on gender practice. As the case studies demonstrate, this inconsistency is largely (although not exclusively) determined by the implementing organisation, response context and emergency type. Second, the chapter contends that regardless of these three factors, gender work is in danger of being (and often is) depoliticised, deprioritised and pursued without transformative potential and intent. The gendered structure and theory that drives the system, discussed in *Chapters One* and *Two*, are significant contributors to this situation, with the three factors discussed in the case studies (implementing organisation, response context and emergency type) interacting with this

[1] UN Women. "Gender-Based Violence and Child Protection among Syrian Refugees in Jordan, with a Focus on Early Marriage." http://www.unwomen.org/~/media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2013/7/Report-web%20pdf.pdf, 26 September 2013, 23.

structure and theory to determine the actual condition of gender work in a given humanitarian response. Third, the chapter suggests that the likelihood of gender being depoliticised, deprioritised and pursued without transformative potential or intent is increased as a result of the lack of appropriate and consistent theoretical underpinnings for gender work in a humanitarian context. The chapter re-examines dominant approaches to humanitarian theory and gender policy, programming and practice discussed in *Chapters One* and *Two* and suggests that the overwhelmingly positivist approach prevailing is not suitable. Instead, the chapter suggests that engaging with a critical feminist ethics of care (CFEC) to drive gender work in humanitarian assistance may help to alleviate some of the contradictions and impasses currently existing in the system. Drawing on the preliminary discussion in the case studies, the final section of the chapter will be dedicated to outlining the potential of a CFEC as an alternative to current approaches.

The Case Studies – Implementing Organisation, Response Context, Emergency Type

Reflecting on the case study chapters provides a sensible way to start this discussion. As such, this chapter begins by revisiting the three case studies, looking for variations and similarities between them and relating these to the greater international humanitarian system. This section is structured similarly to the case study chapters, around the issues of implementing organisation, response context, and emergency type and begins by providing a brief summary of aggregate findings from the case studies. For each of these areas, some general conclusions can be drawn as to what determines the conceptualisation of gender in international humanitarian assistance (IHA) through policy and what determines how gender policy is implemented in practice in humanitarian settings. It is hoped that these findings may help to shape more effective responses in future assistance. In saying that, this thesis does not suggest that these findings are absolute or applicable in all circumstances. Rather, all findings and arguments made here are to be understood as guiding principles only, to which, of course, there will always be exceptions.

Implementing Organisation

Each case study demonstrated in different ways that organisational identity, mandate and level of operational independence are significant for the way gender was understood by an organisation, implemented in recipient countries and communicated with donors. Discussion on this point focused for the most part on the approach of individual organisations to the nature and role of humanitarian responsibility itself, and the core principles of traditional humanitarian action – humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. Those who favoured a traditional interpretation appeared to fall on the side of minimalism or non-inclusion of gender-sensitivity principles in their work. Those at the other end of the spectrum appeared more willing to embrace transformational gender principles. Importantly, as the case studies showed, several factors influenced an organisation's self-perception, mandate and approach including, but not limited to, history, religious affiliation (or lack thereof), legal mandate, cultural affiliation, and degree of independence from both donor and recipient governments and the greater international humanitarian system.

Organisational identity and mandate also had global implications for thinking about gender's role in the international humanitarian system. The extent to which organisations reaffirm traditional interpretations of humanitarian principles plays a role in their focus on gender-related issues, and indeed in determining which gender-related issues are in the purview of humanitarian action as defined by that organisation. At the same time, humanitarian identity *writ large* serves to differentiate humanitarian action as a whole from political and military action, regardless of the proximity of goals between them. This is particularly the case amidst the United Nations (UN) push towards integrated political-military-humanitarian missions as the preferred response to complex emergencies.[2] At a practical level, strict ascription to humanitarian principles seeks to ensure vital access to persons of concern, by differentiating humanitarian agencies from those with other motives. However, as Hugo Slim explains in a paper prepared for staff of Caritas International – a large Catholic humanitarian and

[2] Emilie Combaz, *The Impact of Integrated Missions on Humanitarian Operations* (London: GSDRC, 2013).

development international non-governmental organisation (INGO) – the privileging of this identity comes with risks.

> Another of the risks we all face when we start defining ourselves over against another person or group is that we skew our identity in the process to prove a point ... I have a concern that as humanitarians protest their difference from military forces, many groups may do so by simplifying their own identity, minimizing their goals and limiting the kind of contact they have with suffering communities. This may be good tactics in pragmatic identity management but it might mean you lose an important part of yourself as an organisation. It might mean you stop being true to yourself in some areas. Such caricature may be particularly dangerous for faith-based organizations like Caritas who are much more than simple humanitarian organizations.[3]

For faith-based organisations, as Slim suggests, privileging the traditional humanitarian identity can jeopardise observance of faith-based principles. In the same way, defining humanitarianism in opposition to military or political action can jeopardise compliance with policy principles that may be perceived as going against humanitarian principles in recipient communities. Gender sensitivity is one such principle. This is not to say that it is impossible for humanitarian programs to be implemented with gender sensitivity, but rather, as with faith in the above quotation, that gender-sensitivity principles may become of secondary importance. Alternatively, they could be addressed in a non-political way in situations where organisations perceive that promotion of the humanitarian identity is most vital. This, of course, is most often the case where there is difficulty in gaining access to populations in need – most notably, in situations of conflict and/or armed violence, of which recent examples include Syria, Somalia, Sudan and Afghanistan. Situations of conflict are also where the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) as guardian of traditional principles exercises its primary mandate. Ironically, these contexts may also be the situations in which gender sensitivity and a

[3] Hugo Slim, "The Church, Military Forces and Humanitarian Identity in War" (paper presented at the Caritas Internationalis Humanitarian Seminar on Relations with the Military, Vatican City, 2003).

transformative approach to gender programming is needed most. This is certainly the case in the current Syrian crisis.[4]

Response Context

The context of a humanitarian response proved significant on three levels. First, existing gender structures in the given context played a role in the level of attention paid to the issue. In the Papua New Guinea case, for example, the well-known history of gender violence and inequality ensured that gender was high on the agenda of both donor and implementing organisation and that gender-sensitivity clauses were included in project design documents. In developed Japan, conversely, where international aid was an irregular occurrence, and few humanitarian organisations were familiar with the context and an assumption of equality prevailed, gender was not considered as readily.

Second, the embeddedness of staff in the response context and their familiarity with local culture and social structures appeared to have significant impact on the uptake of gender policy. Local humanitarian staff appeared generally to be more resistant to organisational gender policy than did international staff, and demonstrated little ownership over gender work, indicating that it was foreign, and sometimes western. Importantly, this perception appeared to be dominated by a staff member's position in relation to aid recipients as an insider (local staff) or outsider (international staff) of the response context. It was not determined by a staff member's organisation alone. For example, one participant in the Japan context expressed:

> So when they [Japanese NGOs] do projects in other countries, they refer to Sphere Standards, but when they do relief work in Japan they don't look at Sphere Standards,

[4] UNICEF, "MENA Gender Equality Profile, Status of Girls and Women in the Middle East and North Africa: Syria." (Amman: UNICEF Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa, 2011), http://www.unicef.org/gender/files/Syria-Gender-Eqaulity-Profile-2011.pdf; Global Protection Cluster. "The Hidden Cost of War in Syria: Gender-Based Violence." UNICEF, http://gbvaor.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/GBV-AoR-Advocacy-Note_Syria_July.pdf, 30 July 2013.

> because these standards are too low they think. Japan's standards are not so low so it's not needed.[5]

And in Papua New Guinea context:

> Gender is new in this part of the world.[6]

These findings are consistent with those of similar studies focused on local ownership of gender policy in the development sphere and suggest a continued resistance to imposition of international (external) policy directives.[7]

Third and finally, the relationship between the response context and the greater humanitarian and international systems played a significant role in the level of incentives and pressure from internal and external stakeholders to implement gender-sensitive programs. In short, organisations operating in humanitarian donor communities (for example, Japan) appeared exempt from the same accountability and reporting requirements as organisations operating in usual recipient communities (for example, Papua New Guinea and South Sudan). This finding emphasises again the externality of gender policy in humanitarian settings. Perhaps of even greater concern, it also points to a lack of accountability to achieve good (gender-sensitive) aid outcomes for recipient communities.[8] Instead, it reflects a focus on donor demands.[9]

Emergency Type

Ideas of a humanitarian state of exception or emergency are not new. Indeed, they are explored extensively in writings focused on refugee identity and the position of statelessness.[10] Here, however, it seems a new incarnation of the state of emergency was expressed by

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[5] Program Coordinator Church World Service Japan, Interview with Author.

[6] Humanitarian Emergency Affairs Operations Manager, "Interview with Author."
In South Sudan, by contrast, where I was unable to speak with any local staff members, lack of ownership of gender policy was not raised as an issue.

[7] See, for example: Senorina Wendoh and Tina Wallace, "Re-Thinking Gender Mainstreaming in African NGOs and Communities," in *Mainstreaming Gender in Development: A Critical Review*, eds. Fenella Porter and Caroline Sweetman (Oxford: Oxfam GB, 2005), 71.

[8] Sometimes called 'accountability to affected populations'.

[9] Jeff Everett and Constance Friesen, "Humanitarian Accountability and Performance in the Theatre De L'absurde," *Critical Perspectives on Accounting* 21 (2010): 469.

[10] See, for example: Liisa Malkki, "News from Nowhere: Mass Displacement and Globalized 'Problems of Organization'," *Ethnography* 3, no. 3 (2002).

participants. Rather than reduce aid recipients to an existence of 'bare humanity',[11] as in Giorgio Agamben's reasoning, this humanitarian state of emergency forces aid providers to suspend usual policy commitments and best practices until such a time as immediate threats to life (or perceived immediate threats to life) are addressed.

Binaries and oppositional definitions of context were used to justify this state of exception as outside the norm of humanitarian practice. That is, gender programming would *usually* be appropriate and possible for aid practitioners, but this *particular* situation was exceptional. Participants delineated between crises that were natural and man-made, occurred in fragile and non-fragile settings, were rapid-onset and protracted, and included people who were non-displaced and displaced. They indicated that gender programming in the former of each pair was inappropriate or impossible, while in the latter it could be more readily pursued. At a broader level, the separation of different emergency types coincided with participants' views of what was considered to fall within the traditional realm of humanitarian assistance and what fell outside it. Those events covered by international humanitarian law and outlined in the ICRC's and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) organisational mandates, along with short-term/rapid-onset emergencies such as natural disasters. were considered purely humanitarian. In practice, the relationship within and between the different types of emergencies is blurred, and indeed all are covered by contemporary humanitarian practice. The perception of each and its condition as constituting urgent humanitarian need is, however, significant. It is also significant that, where attention was paid to gender programming in responses perceived as humanitarian only, this seemed to focus primarily on responding to sexual violence. Programming on this issue does not necessarily require long-term change in gender structures or challenge stereotypical conceptions of gender roles. It can, therefore, be assimilated easily into traditional perceptions of a humanitarian mandate.

[11] Agamben, *Homo Sacer*.

An Explanatory Framework for Gender in the Contemporary International Humanitarian System

As the case studies demonstrated, gender is currently understood and implemented through gender-sensitive programs in an uneven, *ad hoc* and often superficial way. The particularities of a given emergency setting guide the depth and breadth at which existing gender policy is instilled in staff and incorporated into humanitarian response programs. Based on the findings of the case studies, an explanatory framework for gender in the contemporary international humanitarian system can be developed. This framework can assist in predicting where and why gender work might garner most attention in the greater international humanitarian system, and where gender may be neglected. Each of these contributory factors can be grouped into one of two areas – IHA's purpose and principles, and IHA's place in the greater international system.

Purpose and Principles

Chapter Two highlighted how debates regarding IHA's legitimate purpose influenced policy and practice. It demonstrated the discursive divide between new and old humanitarianism and traditional (restorative) and modern (transformative) objectives. Here, the thesis returns to this discussion. The summary of findings above from the case study chapters suggests persuasively that, where organisations choose a traditional interpretation of IHA's purpose and guiding principles, gender is unlikely to be considered in a way that will aim to transform existing detrimental gendered power relations and structures. Several factors influence this choice (and the expression of this choice) – all of which have been discussed in detail at different points throughout this thesis.

To recap: first, mandate and history dictate where an organisation will position itself along the spectrum of objectives and approaches from traditional (restorative) to modern (transformative). As noted, the ICRC remains the epitome of the traditional approach, with INGOs and UN agencies tending towards a more modern approach, in line with their particular mandates and support bases. Importantly, organisations that are primarily humanitarian and only secondarily development-focused appear more likely to have a traditional approach than

hybrid organisations. Second, threats to access reinforce the importance of and adherence to traditional principles within organisations. This is particularly the case within the ICRC, where the humanitarian imperative outweighs political objectives (including social transformation). To a lesser extent, threats to access (particularly in conflict settings) may also encourage other actors (usually inclined towards the transformative end of the spectrum) to lessen their work in politically contentious areas to ensure sufficient humanitarian space. Third, perceptions of a crisis situation –of both the emergency type and of the affected community – play into perceptions of the importance of focusing on gender *as a first priority* in a given response. This relates back to ideas surrounding IHA's purpose and conceptions of what comprises a pure crisis (natural disasters) as distinct from a man-made crisis (conflict, famine, complex emergencies) and what comprises a humanitarian crisis (short term) as distinct from a development crisis; that is, poverty (long term). There is some clear overlap amongst these categories and it is usually possible to justify action or inaction on gender issues by defining any given situation as falling into one or another category. Importantly, as noted above, where a crisis is perceived to fall under the scope of humanitarianism's legitimate purpose (pure, short term, or covered by international humanitarian law), gender-focused work is less likely to be approached with transformative intent, and at times is dismissed altogether. Fourth, there is often a significant divide between the gender policies of humanitarian organisations and their implementation in practice. In some organisations (notably, UNHCR) gender policies are already progressing past liberal feminist conceptions of gender and towards an approach that could evolve into a form guided by a CFEC. Their implementation on the ground, however, remains highly deficient, and more closely represents the liberal feminist approach. This brief summary of factors impacting on the uptake of gender policy, and its likely conceptualisation and implementation is represented diagrammatically at Figure 1.

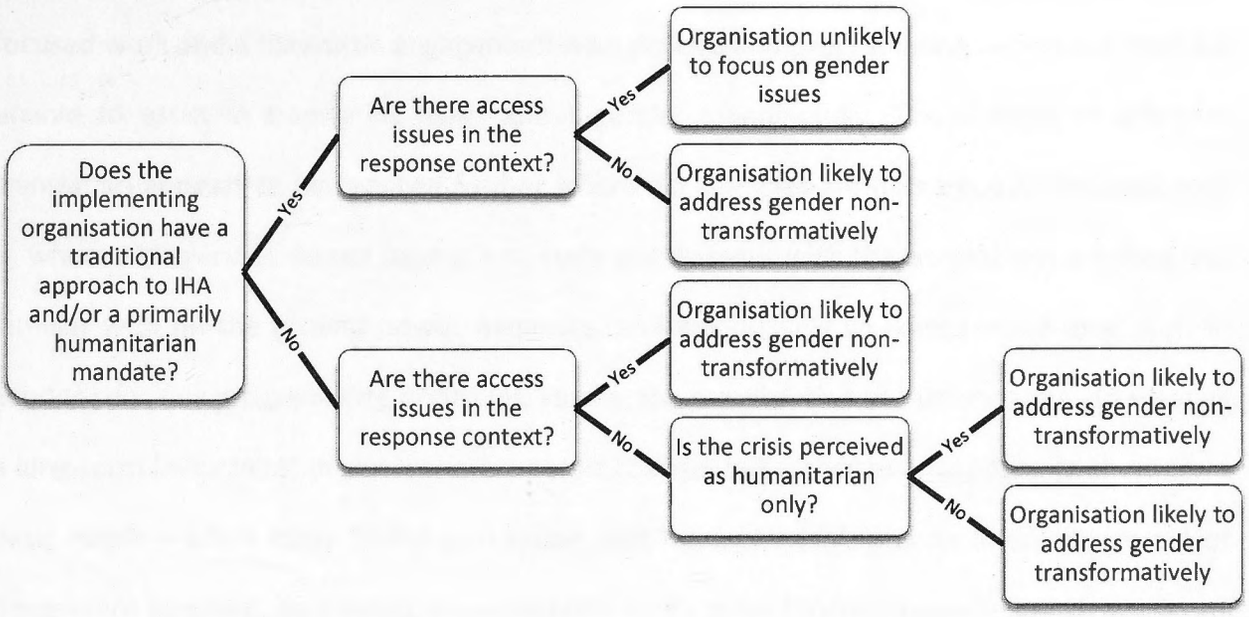

Figure 1. The purpose and principles of IHA and the uptake of gender policy and practice

Context and International System

Interacting with these factors, which focus squarely within the international humanitarian system itself, is the wider context in which IHA operates. This context is at least as, if not more, significant to the way in which gender policy is first conceptualised and then implemented. As with the discussion above on purpose and principles, each of these factors has been examined in detail in other areas of the thesis. It is, however, useful to recap the importance of context and the international system for gender in IHA. Three particular arguments require highlighting. First, humanitarian aid is more likely to focus on gender in developing than in developed contexts. The reasons for this emanate from the structure of the international system – the relationship between donor and recipient nations, and the perception that those in the developed world 'do not have a problem with gender.'[12] Second, where gender becomes a focus in developing nations, there appears to be some difficulty in translating concepts for local communities, within which a view persists that ideas about gender are foreign and

[12] See *Chapters Three* to *Five* for details on how this plays out in particular contexts.

unsuitable for the context.[13] In some cases, this leads to a lack of local ownership of gender-focused work and a tokenistic engagement with policies and programming, where aid staff are unable to assist in translating ideas about gender meaningfully. The chances of effective translation appears to be reduced further where aid agencies are humanitarian-focused: that is, where aid agencies do not have a long-term engagement with the context and are thus less familiar with on the ground power dynamics, and are unlikely to have trained local staff in gender-sensitive programming principles. Finally, the presentation of humanitarian aid – not as a long-term investment in social and economic change, but rather as a response to short-term basic needs – often leads to the perception that humanitarianism is an international act of benevolent goodwill. As a result, accountability tends to be focused overwhelmingly on donor requirements. Accountability to affected populations and deep engagement with recipient communities often remains elusive, despite work in recent years to counteract this trend.[14] Amongst the many consequences of this, where humanitarian aid focuses on gender, the aid is rarely tailored according to the views of affected populations, but rather according to donor/implementing organisation perceptions of what affected populations need. This further enhances the perception of gender (and various other policy focuses) as an imposition from foreign donors rather than a local priority. Consequently, there are very few situations where gender policy may first be conceptualised and then be implemented with real transformative potential.

[13] See Sally Engle Merry's work on this. For example: Engle Merry, *Human Rights & Gender Violence: Translating International Law into Local Justice*.

[14] An Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) task force was set up in July 2012 to focus on this issue.

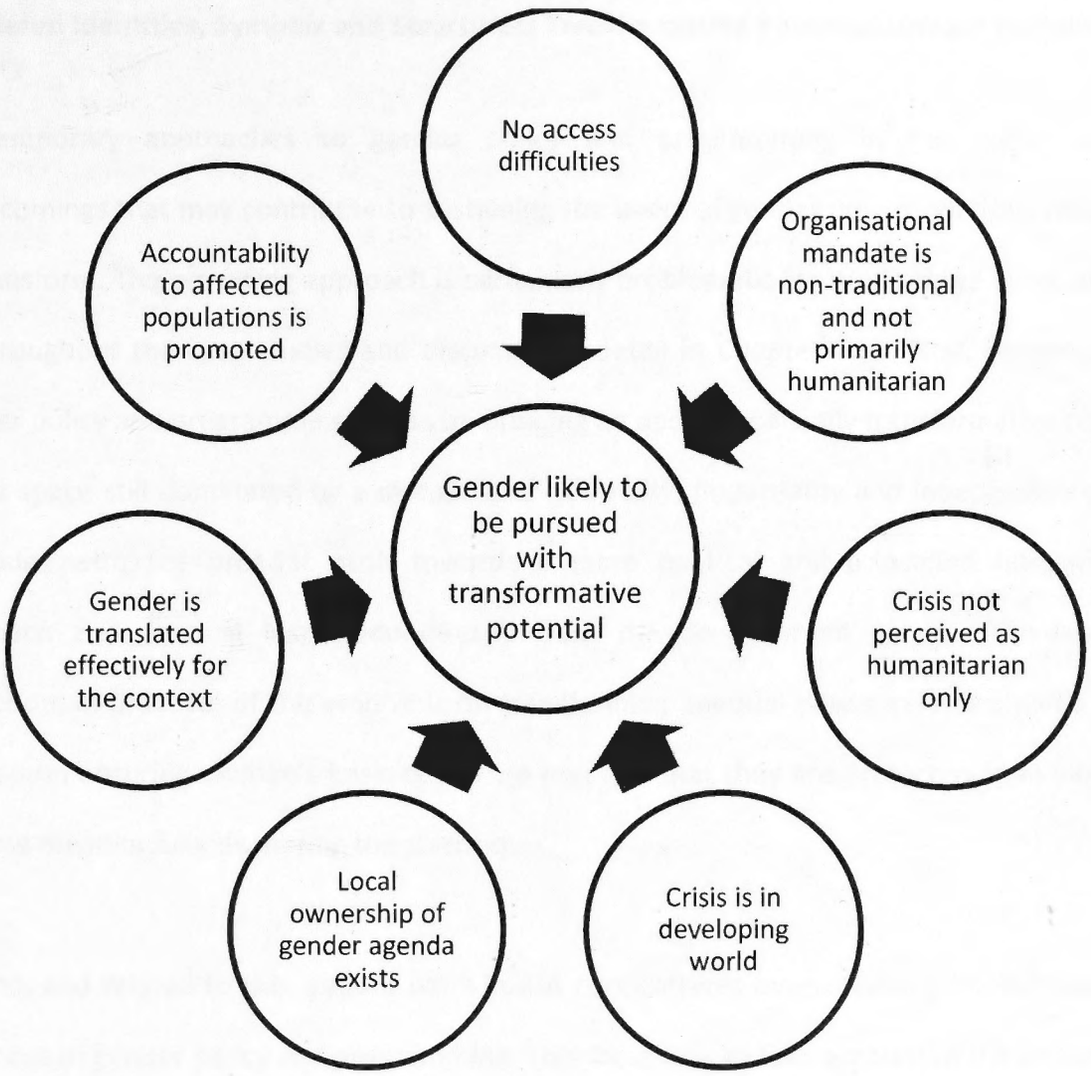

Figure 2. Conditions to be met for gender responses to have transformative potential.

However, a key factor is missing from this analysis – which inhibits practitioners, policymakers and theorists from breaking through the cycle of limited potential presented in Figure 2. This, of course, is the policy and theory that guides mainstream international approaches to gender in the international humanitarian system. Importantly, the explanatory framework above represents the way in which the system operates currently with regards to gender. Noting, of course, that there is some variation between organisational gender policies, gender is approached overwhelmingly through a liberal feminist lens, compatible with the liberal cosmopolitan approach to international relations (IR), outlined in *Chapter One.* As such, the next section is dedicated to elucidating the ways in which contemporary gender policy restricts possibilities for transformative change on gender issues.

Gendered Identities, Symbols and Structures: Transformative Potential Limited by Policy and Theory

Contemporary approaches to gender policy and programming in IHA suffer several shortcomings that may contribute to sustaining the unequal gender power relations they seek to transform. The prevailing approach is particularly problematic for IHA in three ways, alluded to throughout the case studies and discussed in detail in *Chapter Two*. First, contemporary gender policy and programming insists on bringing an openly politically transformative concept into a space still dominated by a discourse of neutrality, impartiality and independence. This coincides with the broader push towards a more political and principled humanitarian approach and drawing inspiration directly from the development sphere. The result: a reduction, in practice, of the emphasis on transforming unequal power relations and a focus instead on ensuring women's basic needs are met and that they are protected from violence, *without* meaningfully disrupting the status quo.

Second, and related to this, gender work in IHA concentrates overwhelming on *individuals* as the focus of gender policy and programming. This focus fails to take account of the importance of gendered symbolism and gendered structures for the operation of gendered power relations. At the same time, this focus on the individual also simultaneously relies on predetermined or generalised ideas regarding women's and men's needs. This comes as a result of IHA's desire to remain neutral, the culture of speed promoted in humanitarian work and the consequent perceived inability to conduct sustained contextual gender analysis. Gender-sensitive programming is thus reduced to actions such as providing feminine hygiene kits as part of health responses and/or responding to women's (real or perceived) vulnerability to violence, particularly sexual violence. While initiatives like these are, of course, important, they offer little help in creating sustainable social change to address detrimental unequal gendered power relations.

Where focus is pushed further than this – to consider, for example, increasing gender balance in access to self-sustaining livelihoods – action is either classed as non-humanitarian (development, or sometimes early recovery) or is largely ineffective. Gender equality policy

and programming, at least in the humanitarian space, then, is often seen as a tool to help aid workers to analyse data and ensure that relief items address the needs of all people, but not necessarily change the long-term social reality of those people. As one participant in the Papua New Guinea context expressed in response to a question regarding whether gender programming should address unequal social relations:

> Gender's not about women. Gender's not about men, either.[15]

He went on to explain that, for him, gender was a neutral concept – one which did not favour any agenda, but simply sought to understand, and respond to, gender-specific needs as they were, without altering power relations.[16] For him and several of his colleagues, the work of empowerment – of challenging unequal gendered social structures and aiming for long-term transformative change – was beyond the realm of gender. It was in the realm of feminism (a concept which was considered not only distinct from gender, but also extremist), an ideology pursued by the uninformed and the radical.

This leads us to the third and, arguably, most significant way in which current approaches to gender policy and programming are problematic for IHA: that they continue to be framed through a liberal feminist lens (discussed in *Chapter Two*). This remains the case, despite the rhetoric shift from women to gender. This framing is also a large contributing factor to the other shortcomings of current gender policy and programming in IHA so far discussed in this section. Ironically, the continued reliance on liberal feminist principles to guide gender work in IHA has created a limited ability for gender policy and programming to be put into practice with an underlying feminist ethic. This works primarily through a process which complements and supports the challenges discussed so far, above. By insisting on focusing on individual rights, and equality as sameness, liberal feminist attempts to transform negative gendered

[15] Humanitarian Emergency Affairs Operations Manager, "Interview with Author."
[16] The catchphrase 'gender is not just about women' is, of course, a relic of the gender and development (GAD) campaign to shift focus from women in isolation to gendered power relations. It is ironic that this call is used here to explain why power relations are not the focus of gender work here.

power relations are sometimes interpreted on the ground as a process of colonisation of gendered social structures.

Chapter One argued that the theories guiding humanitarianism, as well as the practice itself, originate from the specific cultural context of the west. Applying that argument here, an increase of local resistance is often seen in response to the changes seemingly imposed by (western liberal) feminism. At the same time, the liberal feminist focus on individual rights ignores the significant impact of gendered symbolism and gendered structures for sustaining negative gendered power relations, as well as the potential for change in addressing these directly. To those on the ground, it also often appears highly inappropriate for both the cultural and emergency context of the humanitarian response. This focus on the individual, particularly in contexts that value communal wellbeing, also serves to alienate some recipient communities and staff (international and local) when the vernacular of feminism is used, or the concept of gender is seen to relate too closely to it. The end result, as noted above, is often a depoliticisation and/or deprioritisation of gender-focused policy and programming, especially in responses that are particularly politically sensitive, or contexts that are hostile to or wary of the west.[17] As such, while transformative potential does exist within current gender policies, the realities on the ground, as well as the individual focus of the policies, prevents practice from mirroring policy and programming in an overwhelming majority of cases.

Feminist Theory: From Constraint to Opportunity

An approach to gender policy and programming guided by liberal feminist theory is not able to be translated into practice and maintain its commitment to long-term transformative change. Yet, opportunities remain to reform gender policy and programming in the current international humanitarian system in a way that may make it more compatible with the system and more appropriate for the affected communities within which it is applied. Drawing on the analysis above, two key areas of current approaches to gender policy and programming require attention for progress on this point to begin to be made: a broadening of focus from

[17] The opposite effect is often seen in long-term 'development' or 'peacebuilding' operations where sustained western presence has strong political motivations – for example, in Afghanistan.

the individual to the systems and structures that maintain negative gendered power relations, and, significantly, a realignment of existing policy to ensure relevance and flexibility according to context, as well as compatibility with different interpretations of humanitarianism's guiding principles and purpose. To do this, the theories guiding gender policy and programming in IHA must be reviewed and alternative variants of feminist and non-feminist gender theory considered to guide the space. One possible strand of feminist theory worth exploring in this regard, and foreshadowed in the earlier chapters of this thesis, is a CFEC. The remainder of this chapter will be dedicated to further exploring this possibility.[18] It remains prudent to allow many different types of IHA and interpretations of the purpose and principles of IHA to flourish, reflecting the diversity of response types required for the varied contexts in which aid is provided. Rather than attempt to transform the international humanitarian system *per se*, a focus on reforming gender policy and practice to be adaptable to the many different varieties of IHA is more likely to be fruitful for addressing gendered power inequalities in the current era.

Broadening and Refocusing the Gender Agenda with a CFEC

> ... paying attention to particular examples of human suffering need not necessarily divert attention from the social structures and privilege that legitimate such behaviour ... caring for a person who is different from you involves an understanding that difference is actually constructed through relationships which are not personal but social, and which are often characterized by both power and privilege.[19]

A CFEC promotes a narrative approach to international ethics. The approach moves beyond the positivist frameworks of cosmopolitanism and/or communitarianism (and indeed liberal feminism), to consider moral responsibilities and dilemmas as complex stories with long histories, involving multifaceted networks of people, communities and relationships. Two particular aspects of a CFEC need to be highlighted as particularly relevant for approaching gender work in IHA. The first of these is an understanding of dependence (and vulnerability)

[18] It is beyond the scope of this thesis to consider this possibility in detail. It is hoped that the discussion here will incite interest in exploring a CFEC as a guiding theory for gender work in IHA in future research.
[19] Robinson, *Globalizing Care: Ethics, Feminist Theory, and International Relations*, 103.

not as conditions *necessarily* to be fought against, but rather as conditions that exist for all individuals in regular society. This is true both at a micro-level within families and local communities, and at a macro-level within nations and the international community. Nancy Fraser and Linda Gordon explain:

> Fear of dependency ... posits an ideal, independent personality in contrast to which those considered dependent are deviant. This contrast bears traces of a sexual division of labor that assigns men primary responsibility as providers or breadwinners and women primary responsibility as caretakers and nurturers and then treats the derivative personality patterns as fundamental ... In this way, the opposition between the independent personality and the dependent personality maps onto a whole series of hierarchical oppositions and dichotomies that are central in modern culture: masculine/feminine, public/private, work/care, success/love, individual/community, economy/family, and competitive/self-sacrificing.[20]

By removing the negative taint on dependence and vulnerability, new possibilities open for engagement that allow for a revaluing of the different roles and positions individuals hold *within* their network of relationships. Simultaneously, removing this negative taint exposes those relationships which can be understood as negatively dependent – that is, exploitative – and allows space for these to be addressed and reinvented as caring relationships. These include relationships both within communities, and between communities, including that between donor and recipient communities.

The second aspect is a commitment to a relational moral ontology at both a global and local level that entails a moral responsibility to listen and maintain dialogue with those for whom care is provided.[21] Included in this is a commitment and responsibility to practice self-reflection. The end normative goal then becomes a global dialogic community that interacts with individuals and communities as historically grounded relational beings, rather than equal,

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[20] Nancy Fraser and Linda Gordon, ""Dependency" Demystified: Inscriptions of Power in a Keyword of the Welfare State," *Social Politics* 1, no. 1 (1994).

[21] Fiona Robinson, "Stop Talking and Listen: Discourse Ethics and Feminist Care Ethics in International Politial Theory," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 39, no. 3 (2011): 847.

autonomous and detached individuals.[22] In this way, a CFEC may be able to guide gender work in IHA to identify and respond to systemic causes of negative vulnerability and dependence. At the same time, it recognises the delinked autonomous individuals of cosmopolitanism (or groups of delinked autonomous individuals) as both an unrealistic and potentially damaging entry point to engage with gendered power relations within and between local and global communities.

Ensuring Relevance, Flexibility and Compatibility

Guiding the ethics of IHA with the principles of care and listening is likely to present greater opportunities for long-term transformation of gendered relationships of exploitation. At the same time, it provides potential for ensuring that gender policy and programming is flexible, and relevant to and compatible with particular response scenarios and provider perspectives on IHA's purpose. Whether one believes that IHA should be guided by neutrality or a desire to 'build back better', both may be achieved by a commitment to dialogue – attentiveness, responsibility, nurturance, compassion and meeting others' needs.[23] None of these principles may be construed as compromising *political* neutrality and all can contribute to a version of society that is tolerant and inclusive. Real commitment to embodying and instilling these principles both inside and outside one's immediate community will inevitably result in the reformation of negative gendered power relations, whether these be institutionally, socially or familially embedded. At the same time, by focusing on listening and caring, rather than projecting and seeking to implement a perceived idealised version of societal gender relations, gender work may be more able to be contextually relevant and elicit local ownership.

Concluding Comments

The contributing factors in the gap between policy and practice on gender in IHA are varied and many. As this chapter has argued, both the priorities and design of the international humanitarian system and the theories and policies guiding gender work in IHA have significant responsibility for the failure to achieve positive transformative and sustainable change for the

[22] Ibid.
[23] Joan Tronto, *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care* (London: Routledge, 1993), 3.

gendered identities, symbols and structures of humanitarian response contexts. The explanatory framework offered above helps to illuminate how and why gender policy offers such inconsistent and unpromising outcomes. In very few circumstances is it possible for gender to be achieved transformatively in the current system. As the diagrams showed, many criteria must first be fulfilled. The challenge for the international humanitarian community – scholars and practitioners alike – now lies in applying the lessons learned from this framework and the case studies explored here and elsewhere.

The opportunities for change and improvement are as varied and numerous as the current constraints. This chapter has begun to explore just one of these in its brief discussion of the potential of CFEC. There are many other avenues that could be pursued. The task of scholars and practitioners is to continue to explore these until the outcomes desired by those that IHA seeks to assist are made possible. The thesis moves to this task in the *Conclusion*. Here, the implications for the theory, policy, programming, practice and system of IHA of this research will begin to be explored.

Conclusion:
Implications for the Future of Gender Policy and Practice in International Humanitarian Assistance

> Not feeling outrage, allowing oneself to slip into bureaucratized distancing – for instance reducing acts of gang rape to 'GBV' – will not enable one to stay focused, to do all the work to carry out the next round of arduous field interviews, to remain engaged over the long haul, to stay conscious of what is at stake ... And outrage, I think, is generated by continually imagining what it is like to experience the extreme unfairness, acute desperation and outright violence that so many women and girls have experienced ...[1]

How and when gender is considered in the provision of IHA can be the difference between living with hope, merely existing, or perishing for some individuals and groups affected by crises. Following the recent destruction caused by Super Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, for example, humanitarian news site IRIN reported an increased risk of gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and trafficking in affected areas.[2] The attention and response to the situation of those at risk and affected by this violence will affect not only their ability to recover from the crisis, but also their quality of life in the long term. With such examples providing a persistent background to this research, this thesis set out to answer two interrelated questions: what influences how gender policy is conceptualised and implemented in IHA, and what effect this had on the effective and appropriate delivery of humanitarian aid in different contexts? This concluding chapter reflects on the discussions and arguments made throughout the six substantive chapters of the thesis, before making some final suggestions as to the significance and implications of this research, and possible future directions in this area.

Summary of Findings

This thesis argued that gender policy is interpreted and implemented inconsistently with detrimental outcomes for some aid recipient populations. This is the result of the theoretical underpinning of dominant approaches to gender policy being largely incompatible with the

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[1] Cynthia Enloe, "Afterword," *International Peacekeeping* 17, no. 2 (2010): 307.
[2] IRIN. "Typhoon Haiyan Heightens Protection Concerns." http://www.irinnews.org/report/99339/typhoon-haiyan-heightens-protection-concerns, 16 December 2013.

broader international humanitarian system in which it is conceptualised and implemented. In short, this thesis has demonstrated that the liberal feminist approach which dominates thinking on gender policy sits uncomfortably within the traditional commitments of humanitarian action. The thesis presented this argument in three parts and six chapters.

Part One considered the current state of the theory and practice guiding both IHA broadly and gender work within it. *Chapter One* examined the theories that guide IHA. Focusing primarily on the dominant theories of cosmopolitanism and communitarianism, the chapter provided a theoretical framework for the discussion of gender in the international humanitarian system. Underpinning this framework was the argument that both cosmopolitanism and communitarianism are themselves profoundly gendered. This has important implications for the interpretation and operationalisation of gender policies, not least of which is the important realisation that IHA is not in fact a gender-neutral practice. Regardless of whether gender is considered by IHA providers, practice will automatically be gendered – whether this occurs in a positive or negative fashion is determined by the uptake and implementation of appropriate gender policies. *Chapter Two* continued to frame the discussion, this time focusing on the history and current expression of the international humanitarian system in which gender policy is implemented. Continuing to set the scene for the case study chapters, *Chapter Two* highlighted the many variations in humanitarian practice, and the often irreconcilable divide between traditional (old) and new humanitarian approaches. *Chapter Two* argued that gender is particularly significant in the debate between traditional and new humanitarianism and that the debate is likewise significant for how gender is operationalised. The history and narrative of humanitarianism plays an important role in the perception and uptake of gender policies.

Part Two then moved to explore these themes through three case studies. Holistically this section argued that the way in which gender policy is conceptualised and implemented in the current international humanitarian system is determined by three interrelated factors: the implementing organisation – its mandate, history and approach; the context of the response – its pre-existing societal structures, and its place within the international system; and the emergency type –its perception as humanitarian or non-humanitarian. These three factors

were consistently raised by participants in the research, with varying emphases depending on the case. *Part Two* began at *Chapter Three* by exploring IHA and gender in a response type and geographical setting where gender issues are the topics of detailed and frequent conversations: the displacement crisis in post-independence South Sudan. Focused on the work of UNHCR, this case study found that even when IHA is delivered through an agency whose policy articulations of gender are strong, implementation and prioritisation of the issue on the ground continues to be flawed. *Chapter Four* then examined a smaller scale response – again in a context where gender relations are often discussed in the aid community: Papua New Guinea. Here, the thesis focused on World Vision's response to the cholera outbreak of 2009–2011, a health-focused response where the importance of gender may be less overtly obvious. Again, the chapter found that in the Papua New Guinea case, gender was considered inconsistently and often ignored, despite overt references to its importance in programming documents. *Chapter Five* explored a more unusual case, the RCRC Movement's response to the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami of March 2011. In the context of this developed country, the thesis found that there was no consideration of gender at all by this major humanitarian movement. This was in contrast to the other cases where gender was at least considered, albeit inconsistently. The chapter indicated that this was a result of a convergence of several factors, most notably of the place and stature of Japan as a developed nation and member of the aid donor community as opposed to the recipient community. Together, the three chapters of *Part Two* concluded by arguing that the responses examined may have provided more effective approaches to gender in their provision of IHA had they been guided by a critical feminist ethics of care (CFEC).

Part Three brought together the discussions and arguments made in the discrete case study chapters, and provided an explanatory framework for considering where and how gender might be conceptualised and implemented in the current international humanitarian system. As the case studies demonstrated, this conceptualisation and implementation is highly inconsistent, and very few situations exist in which gender policy is effective on the ground. After recapping and drawing together the case-specific discussions related to implementing organisation, response context and emergency type undertaken in *Part Two, Chapter Six* in

Part Three elaborated on the importance of the structure and theory that drive the international humanitarian system for gender work. Ultimately, the chapter argued that the current approach to gender work in IHA, and its theoretical underpinning, is incompatible with the multiple humanitarianisms that operate in the international humanitarian system as it stands. Building on the initial comments made in the case study chapters, *Chapter Six* concluded by arguing that an approach to gender work guided by CFEC may result in more beneficial outcomes for aid recipient communities.

Contributions of the Research – Implications and Recommendations for Scholars and Practitioners

The significance of this research as it stands was outlined in the *Introduction*. The thesis provides insight into the development and implementation of gender policy within IHA from an IR perspective. This is something that has been neglected by mainstream, critical and feminist IR scholars to date. IHA has only recently emerged as an area of curiosity for IR scholars and, as such, requires further research and development. The research also provides the first sustained exploration of gender policy and practice in IHA and addresses important questions surrounding the particular discourse and practice of *humanitarian aid* as opposed to *development aid*. Moreover, it provides some insight into, and comparative analysis of, three recent and very different humanitarian responses that have not yet been the subject of major evaluations or academic exploration.

Significant further contribution of the research, however, comes in its potential implications for future gender policy and practice in IHA, and the guidance it may provide in improving contemporary approaches. It is to the suggestions for future work that the chapter now turns – in the areas of feminist theory; gender policy and practice; and the international humanitarian system – presented in the form of ten concise recommendations, each with a short explanatory text. Further research is required to develop a full suite of recommendations to operationalise the ideas presented in this thesis on the ground.

Feminist Theory

Recommendation 1: *The theory guiding gender policy in international humanitarian assistance should be re-examined and reformulated to ensure compatibility with the many humanitarianisms operating in the contemporary international humanitarian system.*

The liberal feminist theory guiding gender policy is incompatible with several of the more traditional approaches to IHA in the contemporary international humanitarian system. Adhering to the idea of a universal subject, liberal feminism fails to appreciate or acknowledge the different subjectivities and identities represented in both aid and recipient communities. For gender policy to be truly globally appropriate and implementable, it must be adaptable to different approaches to aid delivery. A critical approach to gender policy that embraces the multiple subjectivities in aid and donor recipient communities, and acknowledges and celebrates difference between and within them may be able to deliver on this requirement more effectively.

Recommendation 2: *A critical feminist ethics of care should be considered as a first alternative to guide the reformulation of this theory.*

CFEC provides one promising way forward for gender policy that may be able to be adapted to different types of humanitarian provision and context. Primary attention to relationships of care and relationships of power will provide an alternative to mainstream approaches to gender policy that is able to transform harmful gender relations in a contextually relevant and appropriate way. Further research is required to consider how this could be fully operationalised.

Gender Policy and Practice

Recommendation 3: *Gender policy should be relevant, flexible and compatible with the different approaches to IHA (that is, grounded in a critical feminist ethics of care).*

While guiding policy principles can be pre-formulated, the particular approach to gender in a given context must be based on contextual analysis and dialogue with communities, and underpinned by a commitment to positive outcomes for all aid recipients. Transformation of

unequal power relations should be pursued with reference to contextual sensitivities. Gender analysis by a skilled practitioner is indispensable, as summed up by Cynthia Enloe:

> ... gender analysis is a *skill*. It's not a passing fancy, it's not a way to be polite. And it's not something one picks up casually, on the run. One doesn't acquire the capacity to do useful gender analysis simply because one is "modern," "loves women," "believes in equality," or "has daughters." One has to *learn* how to do it, practice doing it, be candidly reflective about one's shortcomings, and try again. To develop gender analytical skills, one has to put one's mind to it, work at it, be willing to be taught by others who know more about how to do it than you do. And, like any sophisticated skill, gender analysis keeps evolving, developing more refined intellectual nuance, greater methodological subtlety. One has to get to the point where one can convincingly describe the processes of gender analysis and its value to others, including to those who are skeptical, distracted, and stressed out.[3]

Recommendation 4: *Gender policy should be pursued with transformative intent.*

Aiming to transform communities in a positive way is paramount to ensuring that gender policy and practice will effect long-lasting change in communities. This must only be pursued in strong consultation with recipient communities and ongoing dialogue (see *Recommendation 7*).

Recommendation 5: *Attempts to develop global gender policy frameworks, toolkits or checklists should be abandoned in favour of global guiding principles for engagement only.*

Given the contextual specificities of a particular response, the varying mandates of different implementing organisations, and the general fragmentation of the international humanitarian system, global policy frameworks are inappropriate and ultimately impractical. However, global guiding principles for engagement are important for highlighting the significance of an issue and ensuring global commitment to addressing it.

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[3] Cynthia Enloe, "Foreword: Gender Analysis Isn't Easy," in *Women and Wars*, ed. Carol Cohn (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), xv.

Recommendation 6: *Local staff, as well as international staff, should be involved in the translation of organisational gender policy into programs on the ground.*

Local staff are invaluable in bridging the gap between the international humanitarian system and the context in which IHA is delivered. They play an important role as 'translators'[4] of international concepts for local context, and often have networks within communities that can aid the dialogical process and generate a sustainable practice that endures beyond the presence of the international community.

Recommendation 7: *All gender policy and practice should be grounded in dialogue with recipient communities with reference to prevailing societal structures.*

Dialogue should be the underlying principle of all engagement with recipient communities regarding aid provision. The structures beneath which this dialogue takes place should also be considered and understood as part of the process of developing an appropriate and transformative assistance program.

Recommendation 8: *Appropriate accountability mechanisms for gender commitments should be incorporated into all program documents. Mechanisms should capture donor requirements, but also reflect accountability to affected populations.*

Accountability to affected populations is often overlooked, reflecting the power dynamics at play within the international humanitarian system. In line with the principle of dialogue, accountability to affected populations should be given priority, and feasible ways to measure this developed.

[4] Engle Merry, "Transnational Human Rights and Local Activism: Mapping the Middle," 40.

International Humanitarian System

Recommendation 9: *The variations within the international humanitarian system should be seen as opportunities for engagement in different ways with different sectors of aid recipient communities.*

The international humanitarian system is far from unified, with many different approaches and priorities vying for attention within it. Rather than fight against the proliferation of multiple humanitarianisms, these should be embraced and viewed as opportunities. Each may be able to contribute something unique to gender policy and practice and the wider provision of humanitarian aid.

Recommendation 10: *Gender should be considered as a global priority for humanitarian aid, in both developed and developing contexts.*

The structure of the international humanitarian system is significant for the way in which gender is approached and prioritised in different contexts. This should be considered in any gender analysis, and the global importance of gender work highlighted in both the developed and developing world.

Concluding Comments and Future Directions

The avenues for future research arising from this thesis and the preliminary recommendations offered here are abundant. Most pressing is the need for a deeper exploration of the potential of CFEC in the humanitarian space and a pragmatic assessment of how it may be transformed into usable and practical policy guidance. Similarly, an assessment of how this transformation could be implemented, as well as the willingness of actors to reformulate current approaches, would be highly valuable for policymakers and practitioners faced with the challenge of implementing meaningful gender policy in years to come.

Tangentially, several other research projects present themselves from this thesis. A broader assessment of the conceptualisation and implementation of gender policy and practice in the developed world may be particularly interesting and help to emphasise the idea that gender

should be an important consideration in all contexts. Similarly, an exploration of the role of aid recipient communities in the development of global aid policies and directions may be useful in determining how policy could attract more sustained and enthusiastic local ownership.

The opportunities to provide valuable additional contributions to a nascent field of scholarship are many. Already, the work of policymakers and practitioners on gender in IHA has had a significant impact on the international humanitarian system. From a practice that was devoid of gender sensitivity just 20 years ago, IHA has grown now to highlight gender's importance in seminal policy frameworks, maintain working groups on the topic in its guiding coordination body, and activate sub-clusters on gender-based violence in major humanitarian crises. This thesis has argued that gender in IHA still has a long way to go: it is inconsistent, inappropriately theorised, and incompatible with the system in which it operates. Yet, gender issues continue to demand attention from the international humanitarian community – a fact that indicates its absolute importance in delivering quality humanitarian aid for those affected by crises. This demand will ensure that an appropriate and effective expression of gender policy and practice in IHA will continue to be sought. The findings of this thesis will assist in that search.

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